

BUILDING

OUR LIVES

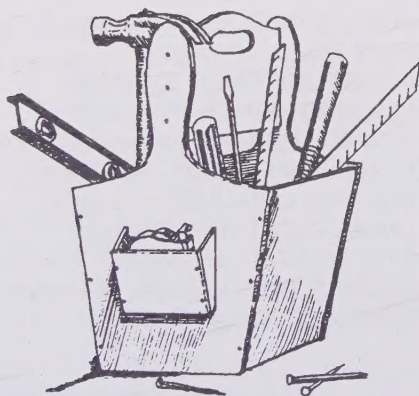




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BUILDING OUR LIVES



PATHWAY PUBLISHERS
Aylmer, ON - LaGrange, IN

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Pathway Publishers

Reprinted 1997

PATHWAY READING SERIES

FIRST STEPS, 140 pages	Grade 1
DAYS GO BY, 158 pages	Grade 1
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An accompanying workbook for this
textbook is available from:

Pathway Publishers
2580N 250W
LaGrange, IN 46761

Printed in U.S.A.

CONTENTS

(Poems are listed on Page 496.)

UNIT ONE: UPWARD TRAILS	5
Jingling Quarters	7
Katie Couldn't Forget	17
Teacher's Pets	29
The Two-Faced Apple	40
The Toy Gun	48
Willing Workers	62
The Day the World Was Angry	72
UNIT TWO: LEARNING BY LIVING	79
Once Well Done, Twice Done	81
Worse off than Wilma	90
The Hardest Word	105
Plain, Ordinary Food	113
The Empty Water Jug	124
What Love Will Do	136
Caught in a Trap	151
UNIT THREE: THE WORLD AROUND US	
Players in Fur	165
The Busiest Insect of All	172
The Whirlybird	181
The Beetree	186
Karen, the Kangaroo	197
Little Men of the Woods	207
Dotty, a Pacific Salmon	215

UNIT FOUR : GROWING STRONGER	223
The Boy Who Had Ten Thumbs	225
Don't, David, Don't	235
Measuring a Promise	248
The Crooked Tree	262
The Big Boy	269
Bothersome Brothers	285
The Buggy that Buzzed	298
Surprises	309
 UNIT FIVE : YEARS AGO	 327
Who Broke the Bit?	329
Rules or no Rules	342
The Friendly Visit	353
Home on Wheels	365
The Gold Dollar	372
Shadow of Danger	379
Room to Spare	390
 UNIT SIX: LEARNING FROM ANIMALS	
A Home for Jenny Wren	411
Our Summer with the Wrens	422
The Seeing Eye	430
Jimmy and the Birds	441
The Robber	447
Ah-Tuck-Ta, my Little Polar Bear	462
Jack Miner's —	
Where Wild Birds are Tame	478

Unit One:

UPWARD TRAILS

What Shall We Children Bring?

The wise may bring their learning,
The rich may bring their gold;
And some may bring their greatness,
And glories new and old;
We too would bring our treasures
To offer to the King.
We have no wealth nor wisdom;
What shall we children bring?

We'll bring Him hearts that love Him,
We'll bring Him thankful praise,
And young souls meekly striving
To walk in holy ways.
And these shall be the treasures
We offer to the King,
And these are gifts that even
The poorest child may bring.

We'll bring the little duties,
We have to do each day,
We'll try our best to please Him
At home, at school, at play.
And better are these treasures
To offer to our King,
Than richest gifts without them,
Yet these a child may bring.

Jingling Quarters

"ARF, ARF, ARF!" barked Skip, the little fox terrier, his hair bristling on his back and his tail moving in short jerks.

"Stop that. Quiet!" ordered Joel Knepp. He set the basket of eggs on the ground beside the pump and turned to look in the direction Skip was barking. He saw a boy about his own age come walking in the lane. "Stop your growling and be quiet," Joel repeated. "That's just Earl. He said he might be over to spend the day with me."

Joel greeted the neighbor's boy with a friendly "Hello."

"Hello is right," Earl answered. "Is that dog saying hello, too? If he is, he doesn't sound too friendly."

"I'm not sure what Skip is saying," Joel laughed as the small dog crowded against his legs, still growling at the new boy. "Just ignore him. He'll quiet down."

Earl looked at the basket of eggs Joel had been carrying. "Are you still working?" he asked. "It's nearly ten o'clock."

"Yes," Joel said, reaching for the basket. "Mother asked me to gather the eggs. The hens always break so many if we wait

till noon to gather them."

"How much do you get paid for doing all this work?" Earl asked as the two of them started for the house.

"Paid?" Joel stopped so suddenly that Skip ran ahead a few steps before he noticed that his master had stopped. While the little dog stood with his head turned questioningly, Joel answered, "Why should I get paid? I'm glad to help out, and if there is anything I need, my parents buy it for me."

"I wouldn't care for that," Earl said quickly. "I like to have lots of money in my pocket. It makes me feel rich." He reached into his pocket and jingled the coins as he walked. "Mother gave me four quarters this morning — a dollar's worth. I can spend it for anything I like."

Joel walked on in silence. He didn't know what to think. It would be nice to have lots of money all right. "But then," Joel thought suddenly, "maybe that money isn't as good for Earl as he thinks." Joel remembered the times that he had heard Earl poke fun at some poorer children in school. His father would never let him do that.

Joel paused at the front door of the house. "Father says it's no disgrace to be poor."

"Oh, I know," Earl said. He flipped a quarter into the air with his left hand and caught it again with his right.

"I'd rather be poor," Joel said bluntly, "than to have a lot of money and make fun of those who don't."

"I don't make fun of them," Earl replied, only half listening. Carelessly he flipped the coin high into the air again and caught it.

Joel decided to drop the subject. "Well, I'll take these eggs into the house and then we'll go for a walk down the road to Lang's bridge. You remember I told you that is where I scared up those mallard ducks last Saturday. Maybe we'll be able to see them again today."

After taking the eggs into the house, the two boys hurried to the road. Skip came bounding up behind them. "Whoa, here," Joel said. "You can't go along. We may walk through the woods on the way back and we won't see any wildlife with a dog along. Stay here, Skip."

Disappointed at being left behind, Skip stood by the mailbox and watched them go. Then he trotted back to the house and flopped down in the sun with a sigh.



Joel and Earl chatted pleasantly as they walked. Song birds chirped from the low bushes along the road. High overhead a black vulture circled lazily. As the boys neared the bridge, they could see the small creek winding through the pasture.

"Hey, I see something moving down there," Earl said, pointing in the direction of the creek.

Joel held his hand above his eyes to shade them from the glare of the summer sun.

"Looks like people — children, I think."

"I believe it's a boy and a girl," Earl said.

"Oh, I know who it is," Joel said. "It's Arnold Wiebe and his sister. They're trying to catch frogs. They were here last Saturday, too."

"What do they want with frogs?"

"There's an old man down the road who pays five cents a piece for frogs. He sells them to tourists for fish bait, or something."

"Ha," laughed Earl. "I'd tell that old man to catch his own frogs. I wouldn't chase the slippery things for five cents."

"Maybe you would if you needed the money badly enough," Joel said. "The Wiebe family just moved out from the city and I've heard they are very poor."

"I don't care if they are poor," Earl replied crossly. "I wish they would stay at home. If they came past the bridge, they frightened the mallard ducks away."

"Let's walk on up to the bridge and see anyhow," Joel suggested. "But we'll have to be quiet," he cautioned as they neared the little bridge.

⇒ II. Playing a Trick

The two boys hurried silently around the edge of the bridge and down the path that led to the water's edge. Eagerly they looked up and down the creek. No ducks flew up from the water.

"I knew they chased them away," muttered Earl angrily. They walked along the creek a short distance. All at once Earl laughed. "Ho, ho," he said. "What's this?" He pointed to the ground. There, sitting beside a small bush, was a pair of shoes.

Earl kicked them. They were worn and tattered. "These things must have had a hard time in life by the way they look," he laughed. He picked up one of the shoes and showed it to Joel.

"They are probably Arnold's," Joel guessed. "He likely didn't want to get them wet while he's catching frogs."

"I'll play a trick on him for chasing the ducks away and spoiling our fun," Earl said. "I'm going to throw these shoes into the creek and see if they'll float downstream. Won't Arnold be surprised to see his shoes come floating down? It's a good trick, and if they don't float that far, it



won't matter. They're worn out anyhow."

Joel was thinking fast. He had to find a way to rescue those shoes. He was sure Earl didn't realize how much they meant to Arnold. Earl didn't know what it was like to wear a pair of shoes after they were worn out.

Earl was walking toward the creek with both shoes.

"Hey, wait a minute," Joel said quickly. "Don't do it. I know a better trick."

"What?"

"Put those shoes back where they were..."

"But that's no trick," Earl interrupted.

"Yes, it is," Joel insisted. "But wait until I'm finished. It's a poor trick that is mean to someone else. Put those shoes back exactly where they were and drop a quarter into each one."

Earl was surprised at the idea. He stood thinking for a while. All at once he smiled. "All right," he said. "I'll do it."

Replacing the shoes carefully, Earl put a shiny quarter into each one, shaking the coin forward in the shoe so it wouldn't be noticed.

"Let's hide quickly. I hear them coming," Joel cautioned. He could hardly wait until Arnold and his sister found the surprise.

The boys scrambled behind some bushes and lay flat in the tall grass. Soon they heard voices and footsteps coming closer.

"Oh, Arnold," said a girl's voice. "I wish you could have caught that last one. Then we would have four. Three — that's only fifteen cents."

"I know," answered Arnold in a voice that sounded tired and disappointed. "But with what we earned last Saturday, we have enough money to buy that coloring book for Susie."

Earl poked Joel with his elbow. "Who's Susie?" he whispered.



"Their sister, I think," Joel whispered back. "Shhh—hh! They'll hear us." The boys strained their ears to hear more.

"We can buy the coloring book, but what will that help Susie if we don't have the money to buy crayons?"

The boys heard Arnold saying, "We'll find the money somehow. It would not be nearly so hard for Susie to stay in bed with rheumatic fever if she could only color."

"That's right," sighed the girl's voice. "The days are so long for her. But put on your shoes and let's go."

The two boys in the tall grass held their breath.

"What's this? There's a stone or something in my — No, Esther, look! Money! There's a quarter in my shoe!"

"How could there be? Where — where did it come from? Who put it there?"

"I don't know, but it's here all right."

"Oh, good! Now we have nearly enough for the crayons, too. Do you think we may keep it?"

"I don't know what else to do. There is no one around."

The boys heard another startled gasp. "Look, Esther!" Arnold's voice sounded

very excited. "Here's another quarter. It was in my other shoe!"

"Really? Oh, Arnold, we have enough money to buy the crayons for Susie. Let's hurry home so we can go buy the coloring book and crayons today yet. Won't Susie be pleased!" Her voice lowered a little. "Who do you think put those quarters in your shoes?"

"I don't know," the boys heard Arnold say in a puzzled voice. "But it must have been a very kind person who likes to help others."

Joel lay very still. A small pebble was hurting his side but he didn't dare move. He hoped Earl wouldn't move either. Earl's face had become very red when Arnold called him a kind person.

Then suddenly Arnold and his sister were gone. Earl and Joel could hear their excited voices growing fainter and fainter as they hurried down the road.

The two boys stretched their stiff legs. Slowly they got to their feet. "Shall we go home?" Joel asked. "It will soon be time for lunch."

Earl turned and looked at him. "Guess it's about time to go home," he said. He

reached into his pocket and jingled the two remaining coins. "I'll keep these until next Saturday," he mumbled to himself.

But Joel had heard. "What will you buy with them then?" he asked.

"Buy?" said Earl. "I won't buy anything. I know you'll think I'm silly, but I'm coming back here."

"What for?" Joel asked. "Are you going to look for ducks?"

"No," Earl answered. "I'm coming back to look for shoes."

Katie Couldn't Forget

Katie Mast looked, then blinked her eyes and looked again. She smiled shyly in answer to the new teacher's "Good morning." Then she went outdoors to join the other girls who were standing around the pump in the front yard. "You mean that woman is going to be our teacher?" she whispered excitedly. "She's old!"



"Almost as old as Grandmother," said Lizzie Mast, who was Katie's cousin. "Can you imagine Grandmother trying to teach school?"

Katie giggled. It was easy enough to picture Grandmother in the kitchen, baking pies and washing dishes, or sitting on a rocking chair with a child on her lap, but never as a schoolteacher. Just thinking about Grandmother trying to write something on the blackboard made Katie laugh.

"My mother said we'd better behave this year, because Emma Byler has taught school sixteen years, and she knows what to do with children who don't behave."

"Sixteen years!" exclaimed Susie. "That

means she was teaching school before I was born."

"Before any of the pupils she has this year were born," Lizzie added.

When Katie thought of it that way, their teacher seemed even older than she had before. Why, she had been born a long, long time ago and if Emma had been teaching then already — Katie shook her head. She couldn't think back that far.

"She won't help us play ball like Teacher Sadie did last year," said Susie. "At least, I can't imagine anyone her age trying to play ball."

Once more Katie compared Emma, the new teacher, with Grandmother. No, Emma wouldn't play ball. Katie tried to imagine Grandmother with a ball glove, trying to catch a fly. She giggled.

"What's funny, Katie?" Lizzie wanted to know.

"I was trying to imagine how Grandmother would look if she tried to play ball," Katie answered. "Remember, you said Emma is almost as old as Grandmother."

The girls laughed. Before they could discuss their new teacher any further, the bell rang.

It took Teacher Emma a few minutes to get the pupils seated where she wanted them, but after that things went smoothly.

"I must not forget," Katie told herself. "I'm in the fourth grade now. I was in the third grade so long, it will take me a while to get used to being in a different grade."

When Katie had watched the new teacher a while, she was no longer able to think of her as being Grandmother's age. When it came to comparing Teacher Emma and Grandmother, there couldn't have been a bigger difference. Grandmother was short and plump, Emma was tall and slender. Grandmother's movements were quick and hurried. Emma's were unhurried and steady. Grandmother wore hard-soled shoes and walked in short, fast steps. Emma's long strides were almost noiseless.

"Emma doesn't look any more like a grandmother than my grandmother looks like a school teacher," thought Katie. "Sure, she has gray hair and a few wrinkles around her eyes, but she still doesn't seem old."

Katie and the rest of the children were soon to learn that there were other ways in

which their teacher did not show her age. When recess came, she joined the pupils in playground games. It was true; she couldn't run as fast as some of their former teachers could, but she still helped. Whenever she grew short of breath from running, she dropped out of the game long enough to catch her breath, then started playing again.

There was one way, however, in which Teacher Emma's age was catching up with her — she was forgetful. The first time the pupils caught on was the afternoon David Hershberger put a thumb tack on Bertha Miller's seat while she was in class.

Bertha was in the seventh grade and had a way of flopping down into her seat with a thud. This, of course, was why David had chosen her as the victim of his joke. While the seventh graders were having English class, David passed Bertha's seat on his way to the library. Glancing around to make sure only the right people were watching, he slipped the tack onto Bertha's seat.

Several minutes later Bertha came back from class. Without looking, she flopped down into her seat in her usual fashion.

She had no more than landed when she jumped up again, screaming with pain.

It didn't take Bertha long to locate the cause of her pain and embarrassment. By the time she had the tack in her hand, the teacher was at her side. "Who put this tack on Bertha's seat?" she demanded.

For a moment no one answered. Then Andrew, a first grader, spoke up. "David did," he said, pointing his finger at the right boy. "I saw him do it."

David's face blushed to a deep red, but he did not try to deny the act.

"You may apologize to Bertha right now, then you may also stay in at first recess tomorrow," Teacher Emma said firmly.

David apologized. It was hard to tell who showed more embarrassment, David or Bertha. But David was sober enough to make Teacher Emma believe that he really was sorry.

The next day when it was time for recess, Teacher Emma said, "How many of you would like to play a new game today?"

The children eagerly raised their hands. The ones who remembered that David was supposed to stay in looked at him with question marks on their faces.

"Sh-h-h-h!" signaled David silently.

No one reminded Teacher Emma about David's punishment. If she ever thought about it that day or any time afterwards, she did not say a word about it.

II. A Test for Katie

The children soon learned that Teacher Emma didn't forget to make them stay in when the punishment was to take place that same day. But if someone misbehaved during the last period of the day and was asked to stay in the following day, then there was a good chance that she would forget.

Katie didn't tattle on the children who slipped out when they were supposed to stay in, but she didn't think it was right either. "They aren't being honest," she thought. "If Teacher Emma tells them to stay in, they should do it, even if she forgets to remind them."

Then it happened to Katie.

One afternoon Katie sat playing with a long piece of string. She tied knots into the string, then took them out again. She wound the string around her fingers and around her hands. Then she got another idea. She tied the string to the desk in

front of her and pretended she was driving a horse.

"Giddap!" she whispered, shaking the lines. She rocked back and forth in her seat, pretending that she was going very rapidly.

The desk squeaked. Teacher Emma looked around. "Katie, is that all you have to do?"

Katie blushed. She could not answer.

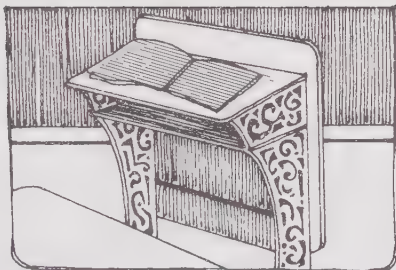
"Is all your work done?" Teacher Emma asked again.

This time Katie managed to nod.

"Well, put the string away," said Teacher Emma. "You're too big to play like that in time of school."

Katie put the string away, but it did not stay away. When Teacher Emma was working again, Katie took it out once more. She wound it around her fingers. Then she tied her arithmetic book shut with it. She wanted to pretend she was driving horses again. "I won't let my seat squeak this time," she thought. "I'm sitting way back here. If I don't make a noise, Teacher Emma won't see me."

Katie fastened the string to the desk in front of her again. Soon she was "driving"



her horse again. She was so interested in what she was doing that she forgot to watch what Teacher Emma was doing.

"Katie, didn't I tell you to put that string away?" the teacher's voice interrupted her playing.

Katie's heart jumped. She tried to loosen the string so rapidly that she tore it.

Teacher Emma stood beside her desk. "Let me have the string," she said. "I'll give it to you and let you play 'horsey' at recess tomorrow. You may play with the string while the rest of the children go outdoors."

Katie swallowed hard. She had never been asked to stay in before. "Why did I do it?" she asked herself. "Why did I play with the string after Emma told me not to?"

Soon school was over for the day and Katie and her friends were on their way home. Katie seemed unusually quiet.

"Don't worry, Katie," one of the older boys said. "You won't have to stay in."

Katie tried to smile, but her smile was a shallow one. "I hope Teacher Emma will forget," she thought. The very next minute she thought, "I should stay in, even if Teacher Emma forgets. I should be honest."

The evening was a long one for Katie. One minute she was hoping Teacher Emma would forget. The next minute she was hoping Teacher Emma wouldn't forget. That way she would know what to do. "But Teacher Emma said I have to play with the string, and if she doesn't give it to me, I can't play with it," she argued with herself.

"But you can still stay in, even if you don't have the string," a quiet little voice reminded her. "If you really want the string, you can ask for it."

Katie's heart beat more and more rapidly as recess time approached the next day. She expected Teacher Emma to open her drawer and hand her the string in front of everyone else. She could almost hear the

children giggle. "I'm going to feel very silly, sitting here playing with that string," she thought.

Teacher Emma, however, did not get out the string. She just told the children to put their books away, then tapped the dismissal bell. Katie pretended to be busy with her work and did not even look up.

"Come on, Katie. Quick, before she remembers," whispered Lizzie.

Katie closed her books and almost went with the girls. But she didn't quite. "I always thought the others should stay in, even if Teacher Emma forgot to remind them," she thought. "So I will have to do the same thing."

Teacher Emma left the classroom without paying any attention to the girls who were standing around Katie's desk. As soon as she was outside, one of the girls said, "Come on, let's go play."

"I—I have to s-stay in," Katie said.

"You don't have to, because Teacher forgot," Lizzie argued.

"Maybe she forgot, but I didn't," Katie said, trying to sound braver than she felt. "She told me last night I have to stay in."

"You're silly, staying in when you don't

have to," one of the other girls put in.

One by one the girls left the classroom. Just when Katie thought she was by herself, Teacher Emma came in to get something she had forgotten. When she saw Katie, she stopped in her tracks. There was a puzzled expression on her face. Then suddenly she smiled. "Oh, yes, I guess you were supposed to stay in," she said.

Katie didn't answer. She just gave her teacher a shallow little smile.

Teacher Emma got the string and dropped it on Katie's desk. "I don't think you want to play with this string, so why don't you take it along home and leave it there?"

Katie quickly put the string into her pocket. Teacher Emma busied herself at her desk for a while. After what seemed like a long time, she came and stood beside Katie's desk. "Did you know that the things you do tell a lot about yourself?" she asked.

Katie didn't know whether to say "Yes," or "No." In a way she knew, but she wasn't sure what Teacher Emma was trying to tell her.

"By staying in, even though I had forgotten all about it, you told me you are a girl who can be trusted," Teacher Emma said.

"You told me you are trying to be an honest girl."

Katie blushed. She remembered how nearly she hadn't stayed in. She felt she didn't really deserve the praise Teacher Emma had given her. However, when she went to join the other girls a short time later, she had a happy feeling — a feeling very different from the one she knew she'd have if she had not stayed in.

Teacher's Pets

"Jonas, are you whispering again?"

Startled by the words, Jonas Beachy swung around and began to study as if geography were his favorite subject. That is, he pretended to be studying, but how could he concentrate when Teacher Mary stood there, staring at him? Hoping she had returned to her class, he glanced up for a quick look. No, she was still standing there, staring at him as if he were some strange creature that didn't belong in the classroom.

Jonas waited, his face turning even deeper red. Then the teacher spoke. "I've warned you boys too often already about whispering," she said. "Jonas, you and your talkative friend behind you may stay in at recess. I'll have some lines for you to copy." Then she turned her back and started writing second-grade spelling words on the blackboard.

After the classroom was no longer so quiet, Jonas turned around and stole a quick glance at Walter Weaver. Walter had the same sheepish look on his face that Jonas felt on his own. But after looking at each other, the boys gained comfort and courage. Jonas glanced at the teacher, then at Walter. He made a face, and then had to giggle.

Walter had to laugh, too, so he quickly hid behind his geography book. Jonas turned around in a hurry, but even that wasn't fast enough. Teacher Mary had turned around and had seen the boys before they could become sober.

"One more recess of writing lines, boys," she said, her voice showing that she was just about fed up with the boys' nonsense.

Now Jonas settled down, but he was just a little bit angry. "The weather is so nice and we have to stay in and write lines while the rest play ball," he grumbled to himself.

Recess came too soon for Jonas that day. He felt even more dejected as he sat in his seat and watched the other children go outside. "Walter and I are on the same team," he thought. "There's little chance that our team will win today." He really felt sorry now. To have to stay in was one thing. To lose a ball game because of it was something else.

Teacher Mary gave them each a piece of paper. On the top line she had written, "It's against the rules to whisper in time of school." As she handed each boy a piece of paper, she said, "I'm sorry to have to make you stay in on such a nice day, but you've brought this punishment upon yourself. You'll have to learn to remember our rules and obey them." She paused, then added, "I was even more disappointed to see you act up after I had told you to stay in. For that reason, I'll have to keep you in half an hour at noon."

A look of displeasure crossed Jonas's face. "Half an hour!" he thought. "A while

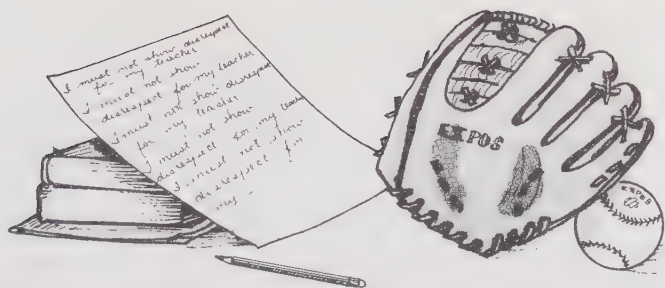
ago she said another recess, which is fifteen minutes. Now she's changed it to half an hour." He didn't say a word out loud, though.

As if she were able to read Jonas's thoughts, Teacher Mary explained, "I simply can't let you show disrespect like that. I think that's worse than whispering. That's why I've doubled your time and also the number of lines you'll have to write."

The teacher's tone of voice showed that she meant what she was saying. It also showed that she was truly sorry to have to keep the boys in. Jonas no longer felt angry. He felt ashamed of himself. Without as much as a glance at Walter, he set to work on his lines.

By the time recess was over, Jonas had filled in both sides of his notebook sheet. True to her promise, the teacher had them do twice as many lines at noon. This time they had to write, "I must not show disrespect for my teacher."

Jonas kept his eye on the clock as he wrote. He timed his writing so that he was finished just before the thirty minutes were up. Glancing around, he saw that Walter was done, too.



Teacher Mary came and got the papers. "Thanks, boys," she said, making it sound as if the boys had done her a big favor. "I hope from now on you'll be allowed to take recess with the rest of the children."

"I hope so, too," Jonas thought, getting out of his seat and walking stiffly toward the door. Grabbing his glove, he trotted out to his place in center field, determined to forget that he had missed forty-five minutes of playing ball.

Jonas might have been able to forget, if it hadn't been for what happened that same afternoon. He was doing his English when he heard someone whisper. Turning around, he saw that it was Rachel and Anna, the two seventh-grade girls. "I hope Teacher sees them," he thought. "It would serve them right if they had to stay in, too."

Teacher Mary did see them, but she didn't say a word. She just stood there and waited until the girls looked her way, then she shook her head at them. Red-faced, the girls turned around and got busy in a hurry.

Jonas couldn't believe his eyes. He was angry through and through. "I always said Teacher Mary favors the girls, and that proves it," he thought. Suddenly he decided he wasn't going to forget that he had to stay in. Why should he forget when the teacher had let the girls off so easily for doing the same thing?

The minute they were dismissed for recess, Jonas shot from his seat and ran outdoors. Walter was at his heels. "The girls are pets!" he hissed. "They don't have to stay in to write lines when they whisper."

Walter stared at Jonas. It had never entered his head to question the teacher's judgment.

"Didn't you see the girls whisper?" Jonas asked, his voice full of anger and resentment. "Rachel and Anna were whispering and what did the teacher do? Make them stay in? No, she just shook her head at the

little pets and let them off with that!"

By now the other boys had come outside and were listening to what Jonas had to say. They soon saw that Jonas had a point. Teacher Mary did favor the girls. The girls were pets.

II. A Lesson from a Cow

"Teacher Mary favors the girls," Jonas said again that evening when he and the other boys were on their way home from school. By the time they parted at the crossroad, Jonas had the others convinced that Teacher Mary had the girls for her pets. He also had them convinced that they weren't going to stand for this unfairness. They were all going to tell their parents about it. Surely, the parents would come to their rescue.

Jonas waited until he and his father were ready to start milking before he opened the subject that was on his mind. Tapping Daisy lightly with his stool to make her move over, he sat down and started to milk.

"Dad," he said, "Teacher Mary favors the girls. Today she made Walter and me stay in forty-five minutes and write three

big sheets of paper full on both sides, just because we whispered. Then this afternoon Rachel and Anna whispered, too, and all Teacher did was shake her head at them. They didn't have to stay in and they didn't have to write even one line."

Dad didn't make any comment, and Jonas began to wonder if he had heard. "Dad?" he asked.

"Yes, Jonas."

"Do you think it is fair for the teacher to pick on us boys like that, then turn around and let the girls do anything they please?"

"That depends," Dad said.

Jonas milked in silence for a while. Then, determined to make Dad see that Teacher Mary was actually in the wrong, he told of several other times when Teacher Mary had let the girls do as they pleased.

"She lets the girls put up the art pictures we make in time of school and if she needs anyone to take a spelling class or something, she always asks one of the girls. Last year at the end of the term she gave the girls each a nice glass bowl because they had helped her with the sweeping."

"They probably deserved them," Dad

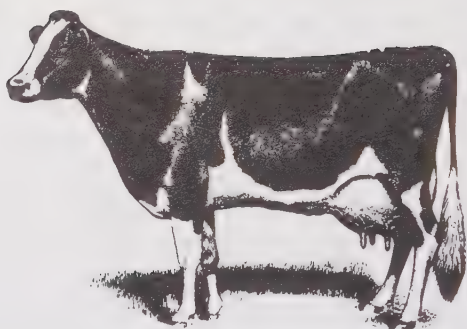
said. He did not sound convinced at all.

Jonas was done milking Daisy. He carried the milk to the milkhouse, then came back and picked up his stool again. "Get over, Molly," he said, hitting the stool firmly against her hips. She moved a little, but she didn't give him enough room to sit down. "Get over, Molly," Jonas said, hitting Molly with the palm of his hand until she finally moved over far enough so he could sit down.

As Jonas milked his second cow, his thoughts were boiling angrily. It looked to him as if Dad didn't care a bit that Teacher Mary picked on the boys and favored the girls. And he knew telling Mom about it wouldn't help either. He'd end up getting a scolding from her if he as much as mentioned it.

All evening Jonas didn't have much to say. Several times he almost told Dad about other times when Teacher Mary had favored the girls, but he couldn't bring himself to reopen the subject. Dad knew about it and it was up to him to talk about it when he was ready.

The next morning Jonas wasn't feeling any happier. He had a notion to give Daisy



a whack to make her stand over, but he caught himself in time. Daisy was a nervous cow and a whack on the hip would make her jump as far as her chain would let her. He just tapped her a little, which made her move over far enough to give him plenty of room to sit down.

Jonas milked in silence. Dad, who was milking the cow right next to Daisy, was just as silent. Jonas wondered if he had given the problem at school any thought. But no matter how much he wondered, he didn't feel like asking.

When Daisy was milked, Jonas walked over to Molly. "Get over, Molly," he said roughly, giving her a whack with his stool. When she moved just a little, Jonas whacked her again. "You've got the habit

of being so stingy with your moves," he said, giving her a big shove. Even when he had enough room to sit down and milk, he shoved her again. "I wish you'd learn to act like a cow should," he mumbled.

Dad waited until Jonas had settled down and was milking. Then he said, "It's a good thing cows can't talk, Jonas."

"Why?" Jonas asked.

"Don't you think Molly would have reasons to say you favor Daisy, and that she's your pet? You just tapped her a little bit to make her move over, but you whacked Molly at least five or six times — good and hard, too."

"But Molly's so poky, she wouldn't move an inch if I just tapped her like I do Daisy," Jonas said quickly. Surely, Dad knew that much himself.

"I know," Dad said. "Cows have different natures and so do children. A rebuke that makes one child obey the rules won't make another child budge an inch. I'm sure Teacher Mary knows that, too. Shaking her head at one pupil is enough to make him stop whispering, while staying in at recess is what it takes to cure others."

Jonas didn't answer. He got Dad's point.

Now that he thought back, he remembered that Teacher Mary had tried to cure him from whispering, too, by shaking her head at him. She had given him a fair warning—many warnings, in fact.

Suddenly all the bitterness he had felt toward his teacher melted and he felt a respect he hadn't felt before. "I guess she knows what it takes to make us listen, just like I know what it takes to make the cows move over," he thought. "Cows aren't all alike, and I guess people aren't either."

The Two-Faced Apple

The rain splashed against the windows, hour after hour. Out in the garden Laura could see the pretty flowers hanging their heads because of the heavy mist. Only the brave little pansies looked up at her as she stood at the window watching them. It seemed as if the other flowers were trying to hide among their green leaves.

"Oh, Christy," she cried. "Come here and see the pansies! They look as if they

liked having their faces washed."

Christy left the block bridge he was carefully building and ran to the window. "There's a bird washing its face, too," he added.

~~In~~ a small mud puddle nearby, a sparrow was splashing merrily about. It looked as if it certainly approved of rainy days.

"Wouldn't it be fun if we could jump in the water the way the bird does?" said Christy. "I don't like to stay in the house when it rains."

"I don't either," agreed his older sister. "But you know Mother said we're supposed to stay inside."

"Look," said Christy, pointing eagerly. "There goes Shep. His coat looks like a wet mop."

The children laughed to see their German sheep dog splash through the puddles, stopping now and then to lap a drink. His long shaggy coat was wet all the way through, but he did not seek any dry shelter. The gentle spring rain felt good to him.

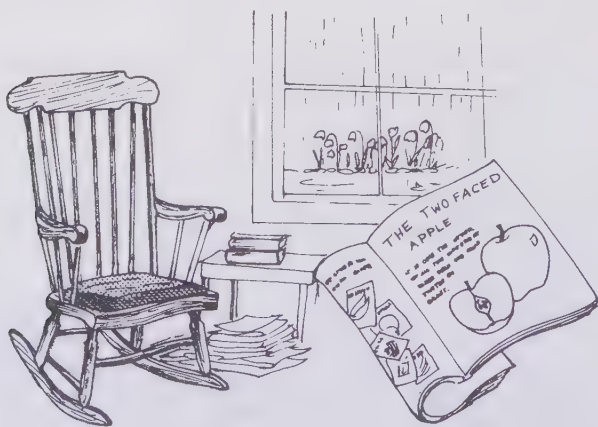
However, Shep's master, Grandfather Yoder, had not ventured out of doors this rainy afternoon. He sat in his rocking chair, looking over a pile of old books and

magazines. Suddenly he exclaimed, "I don't know whether to believe it or not!"

Grandfather must have been talking to himself, because the words were barely loud enough for the children to hear. Had they been playing, the words would probably have gone unnoticed. However, they heard and were curious.

"What is it you don't believe?" Laura asked, looking over his shoulder at the seed catalog with its many pictures.

The old man smiled. "This catalog tells about a new kind of apple. The apple has two faces. One is very sweet, like a Red Delicious apple. The other side is as sour as a Rome Beauty. I don't know what to think about it."



"I wouldn't like that kind of apple," Laura said promptly. "If I bit the sweet side first, I would think it is a very good apple. But then I would be disappointed when I got to the side that was sour. And if I tasted the sour side first, I would think the apple isn't good and throw it all away. I would say a two-faced apple is a cheat."

Grandfather studied her answer for a moment. "That makes sense," he said at last. "And yet I don't know why there shouldn't be two-faced apples, just as there are two-faced people."

Laura looked puzzled. "What do you mean?"

"Well, I know a little girl who can be very sweet and agreeable. She brings me my mail and medicine, and is all smiles and sunshine. But sometimes her face is as dark as a rainy day. She is cross and pouts if she can't do what she wants to do. Isn't that a good deal like the two-faced apple?" Grandfather smiled at Laura with knowing eyes. "If a stranger saw this little girl when she was sweet and sunshiny, he would say, 'Here is a nice girl,' and would not know anything about her other side. But suppose he should hear her scolding

and crying. Then he would think, 'Here is a naughty girl,' and would not know how pleasant she can be."

Laura bit her lip and said, "Now, Grandpa, I'm afraid you mean me." Then she sat down by the window to think things over.

If there was anything Laura disliked, it was cheating. In games at school she was very careful that everything she did was honest. If her foot was just about on the base when she was tagged, she would never lie and say she was not caught. She would not cheat anyone. But now, as she thought about what Grandfather had told her, she was afraid she had been cheating people after all. It was not long before she went over and stood by Grandfather's chair with a very determined look on her face.

"I'm just going to have one face from now on, Grandpa," she said. "I will always try real hard to be happy and pleasant. If I am cross, will you please say, 'Sour apples'? Then I will remember. I don't want to be a cheat and have people think I am good when I am naughty so often.

FOUR DAYS LATER LAURA came storming into the sitting room. She was too upset to see Grandfather writing quietly at his desk. She plopped down on the chair by the window and rested her head on her folded arms. Quiet little sobs could be heard, and her shoulders trembled slightly.

"What's wrong?" Christy asked, leaving his toy box and coming over to Laura.

"Mother's mean," she sulked. "All the fourth graders get to go on the school hike but me. She says I get poison ivy too easily." The corners of her mouth turned further down. "It's just not fair."

Grandfather couldn't help but overhear the children's conversation. Laying his pen aside he turned around in his chair. The children were on the other side of the room, but they looked up when he said, "Sour apples."

The words made Laura blush with shame. "Did Grandfather hear everything I said?" she wondered. "But he must have, or he would not have said, 'Sour apples.'"

Grandfather had to say "Sour apples" quite often during the next few weeks, but Laura tried her best and at last was able

to keep her face bright and sunny nearly all the time.

"I'm glad you told me about the two-faced apple," she said to Grandfather one day, "for if you hadn't, I might never have known I was cheating people."

"We're all likely to have company manners and company faces that are better than those we use every day," said her grandfather. "I wouldn't be surprised there are many other boys and girls who ought to learn about two-faced apples. Perhaps they might learn to say, 'Sour apples', too."



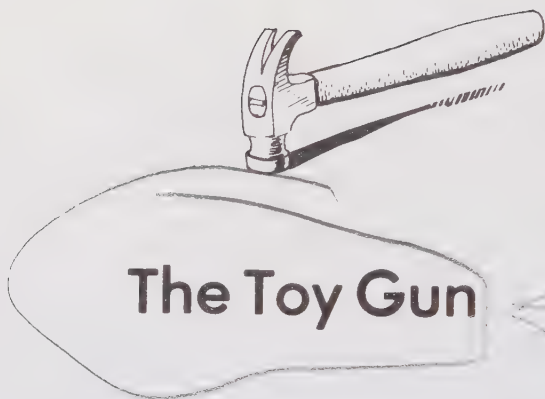
The Boy and the Acorn

A very little boy once found
A tiny acorn on the ground;
Awhile he held it in his play,
Then threw it carelessly away.

Winters and summers ran their round,
And now on that same spot is found
A sturdy oak, whose branches high,
The winter's fiercest storms defy.

The child who threw the acorn there,
Has been a man this many a year;
But though a large strong man is he,
He never could uproot that tree.

And so 'tis with our habits strong;
They grow, each day, for right or wrong;
And he who forms them as he should,
Will see that every one is good.



The Toy Gun

"TAP! TAP! TAP!" Samuel Troyer's hammer could be heard in the shop, mingling with the firmer blows of his grandfather's hammer. With each tap, Samuel grew more excited. The wren house he was working on was almost finished. "Just another nail on each side of the roof and the hook to hand it up, then it will be finished," he thought.

Samuel put in the nails, then took the hook Mother had given him from his pocket. He knew the hook was supposed to screw in, but he wasn't sure where he was supposed to put it. He took the wren house and the hook over to where Grandpa was working on a cupboard.

Grandpa stopped working. Without a word he took the wren house into his hands and turned it slowly over. Samuel held his breath, afraid that Grandpa would find something wrong with it and send him back to do it over. But he didn't. Instead, a slow smile spread over his face and he said, "It looks all right, Samuel. You're getting to be quite a craftsman."

Samuel felt pleasantly warm on the inside. "I couldn't have made it if you hadn't helped me," he said. "I'm not sure where to put this hook or how to fasten it."

"It goes right in the center of the ridge, and it screws in," Grandpa said. "Ordinarily you'd have to drill a little hole to get it started, but with that crack where the two sides of the roof meet I think you can get it started."

Samuel waited for Grandpa to start the screwed hook for him, but Grandpa simply handed the house and the hook back to him and returned to his own work. "I could have expected it," Samuel thought, going back to his corner of the shop. "Grandpa is always ready to tell me how to do things, but he doesn't do them for me."

As far back as Samuel could remember,

he had enjoyed playing in the corner of Grandpa Troyer's shop. When he was small, Grandpa would give him blocks of wood to play with. Even though he couldn't remember that far back, Grandpa told him how he used to stack up the blocks and then knock them over, just to see them fall.

A little later in Samuel's young life, Grandpa's scraps of lumber made pens for Samuel's toy animals. Still later, as soon as he could handle a hammer, he had started nailing the scraps together. The first thing he had made was a toy airplane. It wasn't much of an airplane, just two pieces of wood nailed together like a cross. Then Grandpa told him that airplanes had "tails", and showed him how to add a second crosspiece. This one was shorter than the first, and to Samuel's young eyes, it made his structure look surprisingly much like an airplane. He made dozens of airplanes after that, because it was more fun to make them than to play with them.

As time went on, Samuel stopped making airplanes and made other things. He made little stools that actually worked, as long as he didn't sit down on them too hard. He made benches, a toy house for his sisters,

and many other things.

The wren house, however, was the first thing he had made right. Grandpa had helped him plan and measure and make it "exact." It had not been easy, and at times when Grandpa made him do things over, Samuel had been tempted to make it his own way. But now that it was finally finished and Grandpa had praised it, he was glad he had taken the time to do it right.

"Now I'll have to give it a coat of paint yet before I put it up," Samuel thought, holding it out to admire it once more.

"SAMMMMMMM-UEL!"

"Yes!" Samuel answered, running to the shop door. Even before he got there, he knew that his time in the shop was over for that day. Dad had been out in the field raking hay. Now he was ready to start putting it up, and he needed Samuel's help.

"I'm coming," he called, hurrying to put his tools away. Then he went to help his dad. Samuel, the carpenter, became Samuel, the farmer, for the rest of the day.

Even while Samuel was standing on the high standard in front of the wagon, driving

the horses, his thoughts were on the wren house and on what he was going to make next. "Quite a craftsman." That's what Grandpa had called him. Samuel liked the sound of those words.

All that afternoon and the next day Samuel didn't have any time to spend in Grandpa's shop. But then the next day it rained, and the hay making stopped. Samuel helped Dad with odd jobs around the farm in the morning, then when Dad didn't have any more work for him, he slipped off to the shop.

The shop was quiet and for a moment Samuel wondered why, but then he remembered. Grandpa had gone to a funeral that day. Samuel's heart sank. Grandpa's being gone didn't mean that he wasn't allowed to make anything in the shop, but it meant making it wouldn't be nearly as much fun. Somehow, Grandpa's shop without Grandpa just didn't seem right. It was much too quiet.

Samuel went over to where Grandpa kept his scraps of lumber. What he was going to make depended on what he would find there. "Hey, what's this?" Samuel exclaimed, picking up an odd-shaped piece of

wood. It was plain that Grandpa had sawed out a pattern of some kind, leaving a funny-shaped piece. Samuel turned it over in his hand. "Why, it looks just like the back part of a gun," he thought.

Holding the pieces in his hand, Samuel looked to see what else he could find. Immediately his eyes lighted upon another piece just like his first one. He picked it up and examined it. He put the two next to each other. They fitted together exactly.

"I'm going to make a toy gun," Samuel thought. Even as he was making his plans, he felt a little guilty about it. Just the other day his younger brothers had been playing with sticks and using them as guns, and Dad had asked them to quit. He had explained to them that children shouldn't play with guns — not even toy guns.

Samuel stood with the two pieces of plywood in his hands, reviewing the things Dad had told the younger boys. "But this is different," he thought. "I wouldn't really play with this toy gun and I'm sure I'd never point it at another person or even an animal. Besides, I'm almost old enough to use a gun to shoot sparrows and starlings from the martin box. I don't think Dad will

care if I make a toy gun."

The next minute Samuel was hunting through the scraps for something he could use for the barrel of his toy gun. He couldn't find anything that suited him, so he set to work sawing one out. He was careful to use only the tools Grandpa let him use when he was at home, and to not misplace the ones he did use.

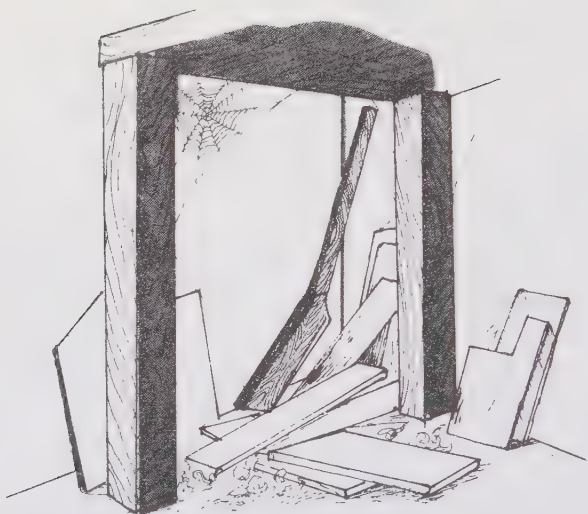
All the time Samuel was working, he had to be careful about something else. He kept going to the window and looking toward the barn to make sure no one was coming. He didn't want Dad or one of the younger boys to come into the shop while he was making his toy gun.

II. Something to Hide

After Samuel had cut out the piece of wood that was supposed to be the barrel of his gun, the rest was simple. All he had to do was put the two pieces together like a sandwich, and place the barrel between them. He put in several little nails to hold the pieces together. This didn't take long, and soon Samuel was standing in the shop with his toy gun in his hands. He walked

back and forth, cradling it in his arms like he had seen hunters do as they walked across the field. Next he raised it with the barrel over his shoulder and walked back and forth. He wasn't a carpenter or a farmer now. He was a soldier, guarding the precious tools in the shop from the enemy. He wished he could go outside and walk back and forth in front of the shop, but he knew Dad or Mom would see him and ask what he was doing. He was pretty sure they would disapprove of his playing he was a soldier.

Samuel glanced out the window and saw his sister come out the front door of the house. She went across the yard and rang the dinner bell, calling the family together for the noon meal. Quickly Samuel looked around for a good place to hide his gun. At first he couldn't think of a single place in the shop where Grandpa wouldn't find it. And he couldn't take it outside, for fear of being seen by someone. At last he stuck it into a corner behind an old table-saw Grandpa no longer used. When Samuel noticed all the dust and cobwebs in his hiding place, he was sure he had found a good place. Grandpa would never find it there.



Samuel was quiet at the dinner table that day. All the while he was eating, he was thinking about what he had done that forenoon. Usually when he had made something, he couldn't wait to show it to his brothers and sisters and parents and anyone else who cared to see it. But today when he had finished the toy gun, he hadn't shown it to anyone. Instead, he had hidden it.

"Really, I don't think Dad would care," Samuel argued with himself. "He never

told me not to play with guns — just the little boys who don't know how to use one."

"Then show it to him," argued another little voice within Samuel. "If Dad won't care, then why do you hide it from him?"

For the next two or three days there seemed to be two voices inside of Samuel. One of them told him to keep the gun well hidden and watch his chance to play with it. The other one kept reminding him that he shouldn't make something that he had to keep hidden. Sometimes he listened to the first voice and went to the shop while Grandpa was in the house resting after dinner. He'd take the gun from its hiding place and hold it in his arms. But he never could really enjoy playing with it. He had to be too cautious about getting caught.

On the third day Samuel went out to play with his gun again. But just as he picked it up, the second voice reminded him that toy guns were forbidden in their family. This time the voice was loud enough and earnest enough to make Samuel listen.

"I hate this old thing!" he thought, taking it across his knee and breaking the piece that was supposed to be the barrel. Angrily he tossed the one piece on the pile of

scrap lumber and set to work tearing the rest apart. He couldn't do it with his hands, so he put it on the ledge along the wall of the shop and tried to break it by jumping on it. That didn't work either, so he went to the other end of the shop where Grandpa kept his wrecking bar. He'd have to pry out the nails.

Samuel was so busy taking the toy gun apart that he forgot to keep an eye on the walk leading to the front door of the shop. He didn't see Grandpa until he was standing inside the door. Samuel jumped to his feet and turned his back, clutching what was left of his gun tightly. But he was trapped and he knew it. He turned around and sheepishly faced his grandpa.

"Why, hello there!" Grandpa said, pretending he hadn't noticed the guilty look on Samuel's face. "I've missed having you in the shop the last few days. Must be Dad's keeping you pretty busy on the farm."

"W-when can I paint the wren house?" Samuel asked, changing the subject.

"Any time," Grandpa answered. "What are you making now?"

"Nothing." Samuel's eyes shifted uneasily to the floor.

"Or maybe I should ask you what you're breaking," Grandpa chuckled. "It looks more like a breaking job than a making one."

"I — I made a — a gun, but — but I didn't like it," Samuel said. And then because Grandpa had a special way of listening to his troubles, he told how he had found those odd-shaped pieces of plywood and used them to make a toy gun.

A slow smile spread over Grandpa's face as he listened. When the story had all been told, he said, "Well, you're doing the right thing, Samuel. You're listening to your conscience and obeying it."

Samuel looked at Grandpa with puzzled eyes. He had expected Grandpa to give him a lecture about disobeying Dad and about playing with toy guns, and he couldn't understand the pleased look on Grandpa's face. He couldn't make any sense out of what he had said either.

Grandpa saw that Samuel didn't understand and hastened to explain. "You wanted to have a toy gun, and yet you didn't want one," he said. "Two voices were talking to you. One of them told you to do what was right, while the other told you to

do what was wrong."

Samuel nodded his head. That was exactly the way it had been.

"Those two voices are two spirits," Grandpa went on. "One of them is the Good Spirit, coming from God. The other one is Satan's spirit. When you made that gun, even though you knew deep down in your heart that you shouldn't be making it, you were listening to one spirit. When you ripped it apart, you were listening to the other one."

Samuel stared up at Grandpa. He understood now. He couldn't help but understand when Grandpa made it that simple.

"Our conscience is the voice of God speaking within us," Grandpa went on. "If we listen to that voice and obey it, we don't have any reason to feel guilty about anything."

"Nor do we have anything to hide," Samuel thought as he tossed the broken toy aside and left the shop. The next minute he was whistling as he went to the barn to help Dad. It seemed like a long time since he had felt like whistling.

A Little Brother Follows Me

A careful boy I want to be;
A little brother follows me.
I do not dare to go astray
For fear he'll go the selfsame way.

I cannot once escape his eyes;
Whate'er he sees me do, he tries.
Like me he says he's going to be—
That little brother following me.

He thinks that I am good and fine;
Believes in every word of mine.
The bad in me he must not see—
That little brother following me.

I must remember as I go
Through summer's sun and winter's snow,
I'm building for the years to be
That little brother following me.

— Author Unknown



Willing Workers

Ada let the potato she had just peeled splash into the water. She picked up another one, and continued peeling. "Mom, how many more do I need?" she questioned, an unhappy look on her face. She was nine years old — old enough to help Mom with the work.

Mom answered softly. "Make the bowl full, then you will have enough for dinner." She patted Baby Mary gently. Mary opened one eye, then snuggled down in Mom's arms and went to sleep.

Ada mumbled, "Potatoes — so many potatoes. I don't like to peel them. It takes a bowl full today, another one tomorrow, and still another one the next day. I'll have to peel potatoes almost every day this summer."

Mom got to her feet and carried Mary to her crib in the bedroom. Just as she came back into the kitchen the door burst open and seven-year-old Eli stood there, breathless from running. "Dad's going to town.

May I go with him? Please, Mom, may I?"

"But did you forget that I wanted you and Ada to help me pick peas this forenoon?"

The expression on Eli's face darkened.

"I don't want to pick peas," he grumbled.

"We always have to work, work, work. Please let me go along."

Ada, who was in a grumbling mood, joined in. "It's too hot to pick peas, and we never have time to do the things we want to do. We both want —"

"Children, quiet!" Mom said. "I've heard enough of this complaining. It is not true that you don't have time to play. You seem to forget how often I let you do whatever you want to do. What about that house you were building with hay bales in the barn? You can't go along to town this time, but if you want to, you may play with your hay bale house until I'm ready to start picking peas."

"Oh, yes, let's," both children said, forgetting their disappointment. Ada finished the last potato, wiped her hands on the towel, and ran to the barn. She thought maybe she should say, "Call us, Mom, when you're ready," but she didn't. She knew Mom would call them all too soon.

What fun the children had in the barn! No amount of work was too much or too tiresome now. They pulled and tugged until each hay bale was where they wanted it to be. "Let's make a line of bales over here. This will be our kitchen," Ada said. She was so hot and tired that her breath came in short jerks.

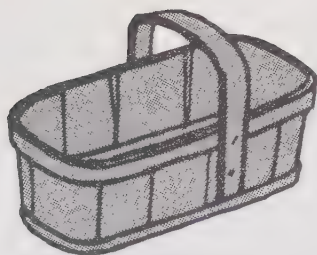
One by one the rooms of their house were made. Time slipped by as the children played gleefully. Suddenly Ada heard something. "Listen! Someone's calling," she said.

"AAAAAAA-DA! EEEEEEE-LIII!" It was Mom's voice.

Dirty children appeared at the doorway of the barn. There were bits of hay clinging to their clothes. They suddenly remembered how tired they were from playing so hard. Their faces looked unhappy as they slowly walked toward the house.

Mom was waiting for the children in the yard, holding a basket for each of them and a larger one for herself. "Did you have a good time?" she asked cheerfully.

"Yes, we had lots of fun, but the house was just about finished, then we had to come help you work," Ada said. "We were



working all the time to get the bales in the right place, then just when we were about ready to start playing, you called us."

"That's too bad," Mom said. "Maybe when the peas are all picked and shelled, you can go play in your house. But picking and shelling peas comes first."

Ada looked down the long rows of peas. It seemed that picking all those peas was an endless task. "We'll never get done," she grumbled. She shelled the first peas she picked and popped them into her mouth. They tasted delicious.

The sun shone warmly on their backs. The children got tired from stooping over. They were in no mood to hurry. Soon Ada was grumbling again. "Mom, why do we plant such long rows of peas? My back and my arms ache already, and we've just barely started."

Eli joined in. "I hate to work. Mom, why do we have so much work to do?"

"We have to work so we have something to eat," Mom said. "Just think of all the peas we can eat next winter when it snows."

"I wish peas would grow on trees so we wouldn't have to stoop over to pick them. Climbing up the trees after them would be much more fun," Eli said.

"All right, children, that's enough," Mom said in a tone of voice that put an end to the grumbling. Ada and Eli worked in silence now, but Mom knew they weren't a bit happier than they were before. She tried to think of a way she could get them to enjoy their work, or at least help more willingly. Making them stop their complaining was one thing, but it was something else to get them to be willing workers.

Mom looked at the children. "If you pick peas without complaining, I'll tell you a story while we shell them under the maple tree."

"Goody!" said both children, their eyes lighting up.

"Is it a story we've heard before?" Eli asked.

"No, it's one I don't think anyone has told you. It's a true story about one of my cousin's children," Mom said.

"Tell us the story right away," Eli coaxed.

"No, I'll tell you the story when we're finished picking peas," Mom said. "The faster you hurry, the sooner you'll hear the story."

The children worked a little faster now, but their backs still ached and the sun was warm. At last they were finished. Ada ran to the house to get bowls to put the shelled peas in. Soon they were settled under the shade tree. Baby Mary was cooing on the blanket and four-year-old Robert was sitting beside them, waiting for the story, too.

Mother began, "There was once a little girl named Betty. For the first few years she was just like other children. She ran and played and slept like all healthy children do. Then when she was four years old — which is as old as Robert is now, she became sick. She often fell while she was walking, and her legs hurt so that she could no longer run. Her parents took her to many different doctors, but none of them

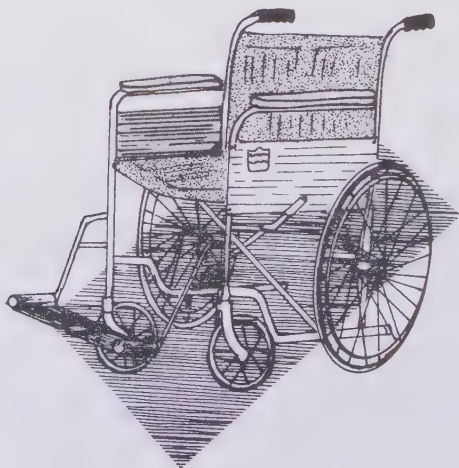
seemed to be able to help Betty. She got worse and worse, and she cried a lot because her hands and legs and back hurt. She hurt all over."

Mother paused and looked at the wide-eyed children around her. "Did the little girl die?" Ada asked, her voice sounding scared.

"No, she didn't die," Mom answered.

"She got better again, didn't she?" Eli asked hopefully.

"No, she didn't get better either," Mom said. "Pretty soon she couldn't walk any more, and she couldn't use her hands. Her parents got a wheel chair for her, and she



has to sit in it day after day. Her mother or her sisters have to feed her, just like I feed Baby Mary."

"How old is she now?" Ada wanted to know.

"She's nine, the same age you are," Mom said. "Don't you think this little girl would be very happy if her mother said one morning, 'Betty, today you are going to help me pick peas.' Betty would surely shout for joy as she got out of her wheel chair to help her mother work. Don't you think she'd say, 'Oh, Mom, it's wonderful to be able to swing my arms and move my legs. I am so glad I can help you work.'"

The children worked thoughtfully for a while. Then Ada asked, "Where does Betty live, Mom? Is it far away from here?"

"About fifteen miles," Mom said. "Maybe someday we will take you down to visit Betty and her family."

"Let's take something along for Betty," Ada said eagerly. "Let's buy her a puzzle. She could put the puzzle together. That would help her pass the time."

"You're forgetting that Betty's hands are so stiff that she can not move them by herself," Mom said gently. "She couldn't put

a puzzle together. "

"Then let's take a book along for her," Ada said. "She could read—" She stopped and looked at Mom. "Could she turn the pages of a book?"

"I'm not sure if she could or not," Mom said. "With her chin, perhaps. But remember, she's not able to go to school, so she can't read. I think her mother is trying to teach her at home, but Betty gets tired very easily, so her learning is slow. She can't read as well as you can. I'm pretty sure of that."

"Then what can she do?" Ada asked. "What does she do to pass the time?"

"She sits and watches the others work," Mom said. "She spends a lot of time singing. When she doesn't have any pain, she is a pleasant, cheerful little girl."

Ada and Eli worked in silence. Ada was thinking about the girl who was her age, yet unable to help with the work. She remembered all the good times she had playing with her younger brothers and taking care of her baby sister. She tried to imagine what it would be like, having to sit on a wheelchair all day, having to let Mom feed her, wash her hands and face, and

take care of her as if she were a helpless baby.

"Mom, do you think Betty ever complains about not being able to run and play and work?" she asked.

Mom smiled. "Do you think you would if you were in her place?" she asked.

Ada didn't answer, but she knew all too well that she would. She shelled peas in silence until Mom said, "It is time to go make dinner. Who is willing to help me?"

"I am," Ada said quickly. "I'll set the table and bring up water from the spring and —and do anything else you ask me to."

"I'll take care of Mary," Eli offered.

"What can I do?" asked Robert. "I want to help, too."

Mom smiled at the children's eager faces. "Let's all go to the house and help each other," she said. "With all these willing workers, dinner shouldn't take long."



The Day the World Was Angry

"Elam, are you coming?" called Mother from the bottom of the stairway. "It's time you eat your breakfast and feed the chickens."

Elam was usually up bright and early, but this morning he didn't feel like getting out of bed. Mother had already called him twice. At last he wearily rolled out of bed, dressed, and hunted for his shoes where he always put them beside the dresser. Not finding them there, he got down on his knees and looked under the bed. They weren't there either. He made a hurried search of the room, but with no success.

"Elam Marner! Are you..."

"I'm coming as fast as I can, but I can't find my shoes," Elam answered. "I suppose Alvin put them on again. He always does when he gets half a chance." This wasn't very fair to Alvin for he had put on Elam's shoes only once two weeks before, and that was by mistake.

Stomp, stomp, stomp, went Elam down the stairs. He was peeved at not being able to locate his shoes. Coming into the

dining room, he glared at the table.

"Have the rest eaten already?" he demanded.

"Yes," said his mother, "but I kept an egg warm for you, and there are still some biscuits of shredded wheat left in that box. Sit down and I'll bring you a clean plate."

"Why didn't you call me in time?" Elam pouted. "It's no fun to eat all by myself."

"I did call you but you didn't come. You went to bed so late last night that I thought I wouldn't make you get up if you didn't feel like it."

Elam pulled up a chair, feeling very sorry for himself. Why was everyone making it so hard for him this morning.

"Mom," he grumbled, stabbing at his egg in disgust. "I don't like my egg fried as hard as a brick."

"Well, you don't like it cold either, so I kept it on the stove. It would not have been that hard if you had come the first or even the second time I called you." His mother stacked a pile of dirty dishes in the sink. What was wrong with her boy this morning?

"Please see that the chickens have water and feed before it gets much later," Mother reminded him gently when he finished

eating. "It's already nine o'clock."

"But I can't find my shoes," Elam objected.

"Where did you leave them last night?"

"In my room, of course. I always do. Alvin probably didn't look this morning and got my pair. Can't see what makes him so careless."

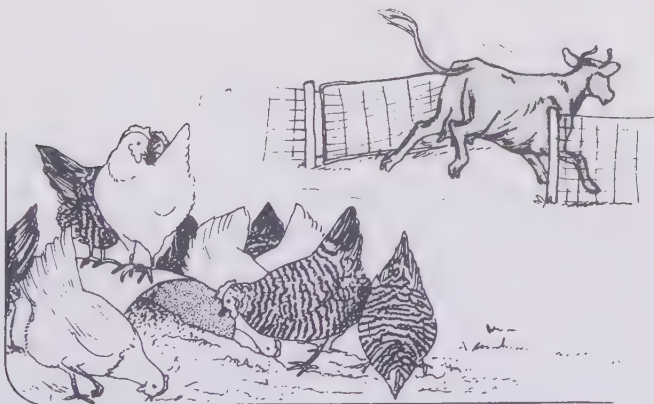
Mother ignored this and suggested that he look in the living room as she had seen a pair of shoes under the sewing machine that might be his. Sure enough, there they were, sitting in plain sight. Exactly where he had left them the evening before, Elam recalled. Angrily he grabbed them and put them on. He yanked so hard on one of the laces that it tore. "Why does everything have to go wrong this morning?" he growled to himself. "I feel like going back to bed."

At the chicken house things went no better. He was in too much of a hurry to latch the gate when he went through the barnyard with his pail of chicken feed. He set the pail down in the chicken pen and glanced behind him. He turned just in time to see Molly, the Brown Swiss cow, go galloping through the open gate. Swinging her

head, she ran down the lane.

There was nothing to do but leave the chickens and chase after Molly. "Silly old cow!" he shouted. "Get back in there where you belong." Even Molly was against him and ran into the feed shed. When Elam followed her, he bumped his knee and hurt it.

Elam finally coaxed the wayward animal into the barnyard, but when he returned to where he had left his pail of feed, he found that the hungry hens had overturned it. The feed was scattered all over the ground. "Pesky gawks!" he screamed, kicking at them angrily. Who would have thought that even the chickens were in the plot against him?



Then when he wanted to give the hens water, there was none at the faucet. He had to pump and carry it from the well. Elam began to feel very sorry for himself. "Everything is against me," he muttered. "The whole world is angry today."

Then just to prove that it really was so, he began to go over his troubles that had piled up since morning. Elam held out his hand and began counting on his fingers. "First thing I discovered that Alvin had my shoes on." Here he stopped as he remembered something. "Well, at least I couldn't find them." He resumed his count. "The others ate before I got up." Elam paused again, for he knew Mother had called him in plenty of time. The thought bothered him, but he still went on.

"Then my egg was too hard for anyone to enjoy, and my shoelace had to go and tear. Next Molly got out and tried to run off." He didn't like to think about who had left the gate open, so he hurried on. "And the hens dumped the pail of feed on the ground and I had to carry water and I bumped my knee and..." Was that all? Elam thought there would be a much longer list than

that. He had planned on going over the list for Alvin, but suddenly he was glad that he had reviewed it in private first. He could almost guess what Alvin would say about most of his complaints.

Elam watched a little English sparrow hopping around, helping the hens pick up the feed they had scattered. "I wonder," he mused thoughtfully, "perhaps Alvin would say that it isn't the world that is angry this morning."

THE GREATEST GIFT

God blesses us with many gifts;
Some last but for a day.
While others, like a mother's love
Can never fade away.

As time goes by it only grows
More beautiful and dear;
And I am more grateful for
That love each passing year.

THE BRAVEST THING

Many people envy heroes,
And think them brave and fine.
They say, "I wish adventure
Would walk this path of mine."

But really, you're a hero
If you can only sing
And see a little bit of good
In every living thing.

If you can pray to God above
With faith within your heart,
And if, in simple living
You can only do your part.

You truly are a hero
If you can laugh and smile,
And make somebody happy
For just a little while.

If you can do a little good
To help this world along,
The bravest thing that you can do
Is smile when things go wrong.

—Author Unknown

Unit Two

LEARNING BY LIVING

THANK YOU, HEAVENLY FATHER

While in this busy world today
We often need to stop and say,
"Thank you, Heavenly Father."

For parents, brothers, sisters, too;
For health and strength our work to do,
We thank you, Heavenly Father.

For birds that sing, for blooming flowers,
For all the many sunny hours,
We thank you, Heavenly Father.

For privileges to pray and sing
Eternal praises to the King,
We thank you, Heavenly Father.

Once Well Done, Twice Done

"James," said my father right after breakfast one morning. "I am going up to Crist Otto's to bring home that pig I bought from him to butcher. I want you to make a pen for it. That will be your job for to-day, but mind that you do it well."

"Yes, Father," I answered, but I looked as gloomy as if I had just received the news that my favorite rabbit had died. What really was wrong with me was that I had planned to go fishing at Bowl Lake that day.

"What time will the pig be here?" I asked, realizing that I had to make the best of the unhappy situation. I knew that when Father gave me a job, it was useless to try to squirm out of it.

"I should be back with the pig by ten," Father said. "But we can put it inside the barn until you have the pen ready for it. You should have the pen finished by three in the afternoon."

"By three o'clock?" I said, smiling to myself. "I can easily have it finished by noon!"

"Don't be too certain of that," said Fath-

er. "Remember that a pig is not a cow. I wish that pen to be well made. When work is well done, it's twice done."

As soon as my father set off to get the pig, I went bravely to work, determined to have the task finished long before noon. Then I could still go fishing in the afternoon. My two younger brothers, Robert and Dennis, were both with Father to help chase the pig home. I didn't think it was fair that I was left to make the pen by myself and as I dragged the posts and boards over to where the pen was going to be, I was muttering, "What luck. The very day that would be nice for fishing, too."

But for all my muttering and complaining, I really did work fast. You would be surprised how soon the pen was built. It was a good strong fence, I thought to myself, with the gate hung on leather hinges and the sides three boards high. The only thing that bothered me a bit was the uneven ground. Since the boards were straight, wherever the ground made a slight dip, there would be a small opening beneath the boards.

"Oh, well," I decided, "I'll get some stakes and drive them in to close those

openings." Hopping over the fence, I ran to gather up a half dozen sticks and short boards to use for stakes. "This should do," I said to myself as I returned with my arms loaded down with sticks and boards.

Did you ever try to drive a stake into the dry ground on a hot day in the middle of the summer? I hadn't tried very long until I knew that it would have been easier to level off the ground in the first place, so there would have been no openings. But since it was too late for that now, I had to make the best of my situation.

I kept trying to sharpen the dull stakes but every time I had one almost pointed enough, I would miss a blow with my ax and chop off the point. This was very discouraging and I was soon wet with sweat.

Then when I tried to drive the stakes into the ground with the back side of the ax, the tops would crumple down like wilted celery. I kept trying until the poor stakes looked more like kindling wood than anything strong enough to stop a pig. In the



end I took the garden spade and filled those troublesome dips with loose soil. Now I stood back and looked at the pen. It looked much better and I was pleased with myself. I had the pen finished and it wasn't quite ten o'clock. Wouldn't Father be surprised when he returned?

I was busily working on my fishing tackle when the piggy arrived. Father was indeed surprised when he heard that I had already finished my task of building a pen. "You remembered my instructions to build it well?" he asked, his voice sounding doubtful.

"Sure," I answered. "Why, the boards are this high." I held my hands out at the height of about four feet from the ground. "No pig will ever jump over it."

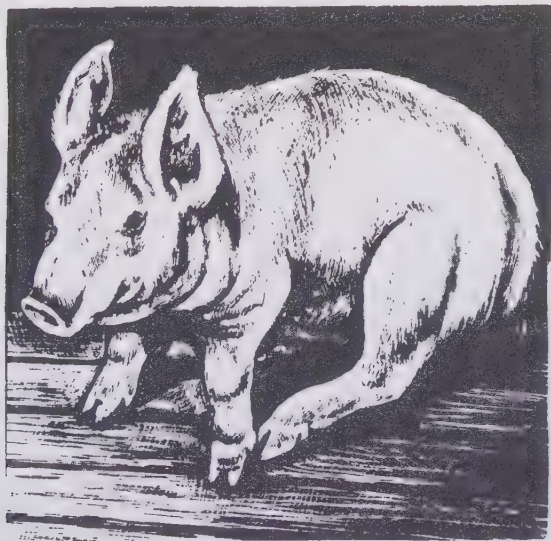
"No," Father said as he walked with me to inspect the pen. His sharp eyes seemed to look right through the boards. "No, the pig won't jump over those boards. But didn't I say that a pig is not a cow, and must have a different kind of fence?"

"Yes, Father," I agreed, "a pig is quite different from a cow."

Opening the door on its leather hinges, I stood back while my brothers chased the

pig inside. That was the first time I got a good look at the stranger. He did not appear to be much of a threat to any pen, but stood meekly in one corner. "He's probably tired from the long walk," I guessed. Robert brought him a couple ears of corn while Father sent Dennis and me to the barn to carry out a watering trough.

"There, Mr. Pig," I said as we placed the trough inside and poured some water into it for him. "You should say thank you for service like that! You have food and water, plus a nice place to live in."



The pig was moving around a little now, examining his new home. Then he stopped with a grunt and looked up at me. Did I just imagine there was a sly grin on his snout? "Good-bye, Pig," I called out, as I returned to getting my fishing tackle ready for the afternoon trip to Bowl Lake.

Dinner was almost over when it happened. I had finished eating, but we were still sitting at the table. I was eager to be on my way but did not have enough nerve to ask to be excused until the rest had finished their meal. Just then Robert glanced out of the window. "James, James!" he shouted, as if I were a mile away. "The pig is out!"

Hearing this, I leaped from the table. My father was starting to say, "When work's well done..." But I was rude enough to dash from the room, not staying to catch the rest.

I chased after the runaway pig and close on my heels followed Robert and Dennis. The pig had a good start on us, and he meant to make the best of it. He headed straight for the woods, woof-woofing through underbrush where it was nearly impossible for us to follow.



I got all scratched up in a patch of wild blackberry brambles, and Dennis tripped over a log and hurt his leg. The merry chase went on and on, and the farther it went, the less merry it became. At times we lost sight of the pig, but then it always happened that we caught a glimpse of it through the trees ahead of us. He slowed down at last and we overtook him.

Panting from the run, we circled the pig and headed him homeward. Once we got the idea we could catch him and perhaps carry him home. We surrounded the pig and I sneaked as close as I could from behind him. Then I made a great leap, but

my arms were empty, except for the loose leaves on the forest floor. Mr. Pig had been too smart for me, and with a "Woof-woof" he broke easily through our line.

After a lot of shouting and running and panting, and with some more scratches and bruises, we finally coaxed the pig into our barn. Here he was penned while I repaired the fence. The pig had easily rooted away the loose earth beneath the boards and made his escape. I brought some more boards and made a trench all around the outside, making it quite impossible for the pig to escape again. Then we chased him back into the pen and closed the door.

It was exactly three o'clock.

I was determined to still get some fishing done. I grabbed my fishing pole and wearily started up the hill toward Bowl Lake. There was still time to do a little fishing. I had barely reached the top of the hill when the excited cry of my brother Dennis struck a chill to the roots of my hair.

"James, James! The pig is out!"

Despair settled over me. I turned homeward and the first thing I did was to put my fishing tackle away in the barn. Then I

checked the pen to see how the pig had gotten out. I found the lower hinge torn from the door where the pig had pushed his way out.

I was already tired from our first chase, but it seemed the pig had been made more lively by it. As I came in sight of him, a friendly neighbor was heading him off. For a moment it looked as if we would get the pig into the barn without any trouble, but then it happened. Mr. Pig turned suddenly, dashed between the neighbor's legs and disappeared down the slope. It was two hours later when we finally had him back in the barn.

My feelings can better be imagined than described. When my father came and stood silently watching while I tried to repair the torn hinge, it didn't make me feel much better.

I can not say, as story books do, that from then on I always did my work right the first time, but when Father looked at me and said, "Once well done is twice done," I knew I would remember those words long after the pig was forgotten.

Worse Off Than Wilma

Wilma Gingerich wistfully watched her younger brothers and sisters skip down the lane on their way to school. She swallowed hard and tried to blink back the tears that pushed at her eyelids. "To think that this was the year I was trying to have perfect attendance," she thought.

It was Wilma's first morning home from the hospital, and she should have been happy, but she wasn't. "At least, when I was in the hospital I didn't have to lie here and watch the other children go to school," she thought, letting the tears slip down her face.

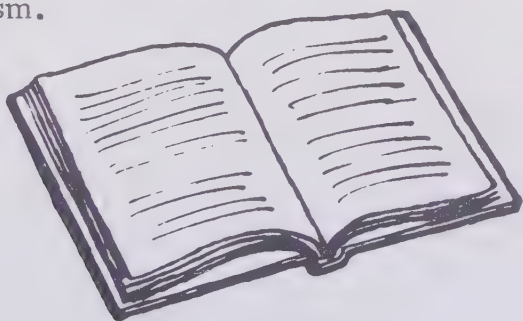
Mom Gingerich came into the living room. "Well, do you feel like doing some school work this morning?" she asked cheerfully. "I don't know how I'm going to get along, being your nurse and teacher both, but I'll try and do my best."

Mom's cheerfulness wasn't forced — it came naturally from the depth of her heart. She was grateful for so many things. The car that had hit Wilma on her way home from school had gone over her

leg and not over her head. The doctor had agreed to fix up a way they could have Wilma's leg in traction at home instead of keeping her at the hospital for six weeks. Time was all it would take to restore Wilma's usual good health. Dr. Warren had told them that even though the fracture was above the knee, it was not a bad one to heal.

The only thing that cast a shadow over Mom's happiness was the gloomy look on Wilma's face. If only she could help her see the brighter side of things and realize how much worse things could be. Mom pretended she didn't notice the trace of tears on Wilma's face and picked up the pile of school books from the table beside the bed. "Arithmetic first?" she asked.

"Might as well," said Wilma without enthusiasm.



Wilma found it hard to concentrate on her problems. She repeated the arithmetic she had done in her head countless times since the accident. "Six weeks," she thought. "Seven days in a week — that makes forty-two days." Wilma glanced at the calendar. "In six weeks from now it will be the middle of May. The leaves will be on the trees, the garden will be planted, we'll have mowed the lawn by then." Wilma sighed. Six weeks from now school would be out for the summer and she would miss the end-of-the-term picnic.

"Look who's coming," exclaimed Mom.

Wilma turned her head and saw a buggy coming in the lane. "Grandma and Aunt Mandy!" she said, sounding happy for the first time that morning.

Aunt Mandy was Wilma's favorite aunt. She was almost as old as Mom, but she didn't seem that old to Wilma. Maybe it was because she had never married and didn't have a family that she seemed more like a girl than a woman. The thing Wilma appreciated most about Aunt Mandy was her way of trying to understand everyone's troubles. She didn't have an answer to all Wilma's problems, but just knowing that

she cared always seemed to help.

Today was no different. Aunt Mandy was her usual understanding self. "Does your leg hurt a lot?" she asked.

"Not when I lie still," Wilma answered. "I don't mind the pain as much as I mind missing out on things in school." Her voice was a little unsteady and the tears wanted to start again.

"I believe it. I believe it," said Aunt Mandy. "But this isn't your last year in school. You can always look forward to going again next year."

"If I don't have another accident," Wilma said. But she had to smile when she said it.

"Let's hope not," Aunt Mandy exclaimed. "You've walked to and from school nearly four years without having an accident, so it's not very likely that you'll have another one next year."

The forenoon passed quickly. When it was time to set the table, Aunt Mandy went into the kitchen and talked to Mom in a low tone of voice. The next minute the two of them were moving the kitchen table into the living room. "Good thing you have such a nice big living room," said Aunt Mandy.

"You can put the table in here and it's still not crowded."

Mom glanced around the room. "We'll rearrange the furniture to give us even more room, then we'll keep the table in here until Wilma can come to the kitchen again."

When Dad and Wilma's two older brothers came in for dinner, they found the table set in the living room. Dad thought it was a very good idea.

The conversation at the dinner table turned to the accident. Grandmother and Aunt Mandy wanted to know just how everything had happened, how they had gotten to the hospital, and everything else about it. As usual, the conversation ended with the usual remark — "Things could have been a lot worse."

"Yes, she could have broken both legs, and then she'd have to stick them both up in the air," Roman said good-naturedly. Being six years older than Wilma, he always liked to tease her.

"I can't see why that would be so much worse," Wilma said. "I'd still have to lie here six weeks. I might as well have two legs healing than one."

"When you get up and try to walk, you'll be glad you have only one broken leg and not two," Dad said.

Wilma knew Dad was right, but she didn't admit it. All she could think of was the fun she was missing at school. Aunt Mandy saw Wilma's clouded face, and a plan started to form in her mind.

The first few days in bed passed slowly for Wilma. On Friday afternoon the school children came to sing for her and to bring her a "sunshine box." In a large box were twenty neatly wrapped packages. Wilma was to open one package a day until they were all opened.

Wilma turned her head to look into the box. Such an assortment of sizes and shapes! "I'll have a hard time deciding which package to open first," she said. She managed to thank the children with a smile, but when they left she had to fight tears once more. "I'd let any one of them have this 'sunshine box' if I could be in their place," she sobbed to Mom.

"I know," Mom said, "but since you have to stay in bed, they are trying to make the time seem shorter for you."

Wilma didn't answer, but to herself she

thought, "It won't take long to open a package each morning. I can't see why that should make the time seem much shorter."

Wilma opened a package right away. She chose one that was shaped like a triangle. It was the most curious one of them all, but the shape turned out to be false. It was a jigsaw puzzle, packed tightly so it would not rattle and put up in the shape of a triangle. The note inside said, "You can't always tell by the size and shape, can you?" It was signed, "The Ben Mast Family."

"There's no way I can put a puzzle together as long as I have to stay on my back," Wilma said.

"No, but you can put it together after you're out of bed," Mom said. "The rest of the children will enjoy helping you."

II. Another "Sunshine Box"

The next day Wilma got another kind of "sunshine box." This one had her baffled for a while, but it turned out to be even more interesting than the first one.

"A package for you, Wilma," called Mom, coming in with the mail. "And three more greetings."

Wilma eagerly reached for the package and turned it over in her hand. It was square and flat. At first Wilma thought it might be a book, but when she picked it up she knew it wasn't heavy enough to be a book. "Is this Aunt Mandy's writing?" she asked, looking at the outside of the package more closely.

"Open it and see," said Mom, who knew already that it was.

Wilma opened the package. Whatever it was, it was packed into a greeting card box. The box was taped shut. What would it be?

Wilma's eyes opened wide. She was sure she wasn't seeing right. What did Aunt Mandy mean, sending her a whole box of greeting cards?

Mom couldn't help but chuckle. "She certainly must be sincere in hoping you'll get well soon. Instead of sending only one card, she's sending you a whole boxful."

"They're not really get-well cards, Mom," Wilma said, reading what it said on the outside of the box. "Sunshine Line Cheer and Hello."

Mom came to look at the cards. "Read your letter and see what you're supposed to

do with them," she said.

Wilma unfolded the letter and read,

"Dear Wilma,

Most of the time when we get cards they are for us —to put away as a remembrance of the friends who sent them to us. However, these cards are different. They are not for you to keep, but to send to other people whom you feel are worse off than you are. If you can't think of enough people like that, I'll help you when I come to visit. I hope that will be by the end of this week.

With love,
Aunt Mandy."

"Well, now, that's a different gift!" Mom exclaimed. "Leave it to Aunt Mandy to think of something like that."

"But Mom, how can I ever think of eighteen people who are worse off than I am?" cried Wilma. "Why, I can't even think of one right now."

"Oh, come on," Mom said. "Maybe you can't think of anyone right off, but if you stop to think a while I'm sure you'll think of some."

"Like who?" asked Wilma. She couldn't think of anyone her age who had to stay in bed as long as she did.

"What about Mrs. Dan Byler?" asked Mom. "She hasn't been in church all winter. Her legs hurt so badly, she can hardly walk anymore."

"But I can't walk at all," Wilma said.

"You will be able to walk again within a few months," Mom said. "Lydia can't look forward to ever getting much better than she is now."

For a long time Wilma was silent. At last she said, "I didn't think of old people like Lydia. I was trying to think of someone my age."

"Aunt Mandy didn't say anything about age," Mom said. "It would be nice to send a few of your cards to boys and girls your age, but I'd send some of them to older and younger people, too."

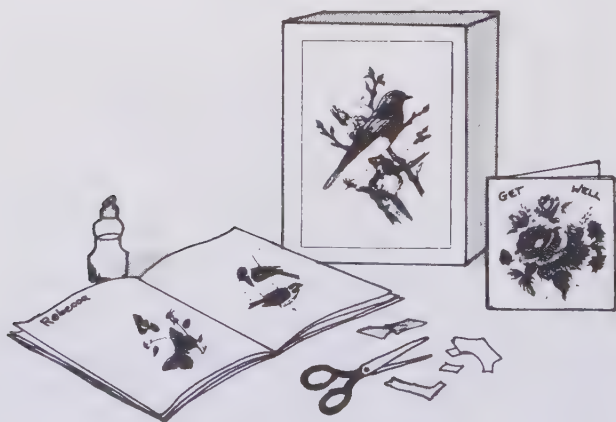
Younger people. Was Mom trying to say that there were younger people who were worse off than she was? Wilma tried to think of someone. Soon she said. "Little Rebecca Kuhns would probably be happy if she got a card in the mail. She likes birds. I'm going to see if any of these

cards have birds on them."

Rebecca Kuhns was a little retarded girl who lived in the same church district. She was not seriously retarded and was really a cute, likeable little girl. The idea of sending her a card pleased Wilma. "Hey, Mom, I know what I can do," she said. "I'm going to look through old reading books and magazines for bird pictures and make a little scrapbook for Rebecca. I'll send it with the card."

"That's a very good idea," Mom said. "I have a box of old greeting cards in the attic that I'll let you cut up, too."

"Snip! Snip! Snip!" Wilma was happily



at work all afternoon. She made the little scrapbook. She wrote a letter in Pennsylvania German so Rebecca would understand it when her parents read it to her. Then with Mom's help she wrapped everything and got it ready to send. When she looked at the clock, she couldn't believe her eyes. It was time for the schoolchildren to come home.

The next morning Wilma was at work again. "What could I send with Mrs. Dan Byler's card?" she called to Mom, who was working in the kitchen.

"Lydia likes poems," said Mom. "Why don't you copy a few poems to send along?"

"I'll copy them from this poem booklet Teacher gave me," said Wilma. "There are some nice ones in it."

Word of Wilma's unusual "sunshine" box traveled. Her sister told the children at school about it, and soon the children's parents were sending notes to Wilma through the school children. One family knew of a girl with a bone disease. Her bones were brittle, so that she had as many as six or seven fractures a year. She was just two years younger than Wilma.

Another mother wrote, "I have a niece in

Ohio who has cancer. She is not expected to live another year. Here is her name and address, in case you want to send her a card."

On Friday when the Budget came, Wilma read the "Showers" and got the names of three other people whom she thought were worse off than she was. She wrote letters, copied poems, made more little scrap-books for young children, and made up riddles that rhymed for others. Once she got started, Wilma could not believe how many things she could think of doing.

Time passed more swiftly for Wilma now, but she got a second reward for the things she did — one she had not expected. She started to hear from the people to whom she had written. Mrs. Dan Byler wrote to thank her for the letter and the poems. She sent Wilma a get-well card and a handkerchief. "Come and see me when you are better," she invited.

Wilma lay thinking. Old Lydia Byler knew that Wilma would get better and be able to go away before she did. And she wanted Wilma to come see her. Lydia was no longer just an old woman in the neighborhood. She was now a friend.

Wilma's biggest reward came one afternoon when Sam Kuhn's wife and little girl came to visit. The minute little Rebecca was inside the door, she held something up for Mom to see. Then she saw Wilma and came to show her what she had. Wilma saw that it was the little bird book she had made for her. It looked dog-eared and worn, but it still held together.

"That book really means something to her." smiled Mrs. Kuhns. "She even takes it to bed with her. Usually we don't let her take it out of the house, but today I thought I'd let her bring it along. Of course, she doesn't understand who made it, but I thought it might show you how much she likes it."

Wilma helped Rebecca look at all the pictures. Then while Mom and Mrs. Kuhns sat and visited, Wilma made another scrapbook for Rebecca. This time Rebecca was there to watch Wilma make it, and understood. When it was finished, she clutched it tightly in her hand, then ran to



show it to her mother. She pointed to the little book, then to Wilma. "Mine," she said happily.

Seeing Rebecca's happiness was all the thanks Wilma needed, but Mrs. Kuhns still thanked her again. "If everyone were as kind to Rebecca as you are, she'd have it a lot nicer," she said, her voice sounding a little sad. "But I'm sure children don't mean to be unkind. They just don't understand that Rebecca will always be a child, no matter how big she grows."

Wilma was strangely silent after the visitors had left. She thought of all the sick people she had learned about since the day she had gotten Aunt Mandy's "sunshine box." Of all the people she had learned to know, Rebecca's case had touched her the most. "She will always remain a child, no matter how big she grows." That's what her mother had said about her.

Wilma looked at her leg that was in traction. When she thought of people like Rebecca and Mrs. Byler and the little girl with cancer, her own stay in bed seemed very temporary. "And to think that at first I thought I couldn't think of anyone else who was worse off than I am," she thought.

The Hardest Word

George Bontrager lay on his stomach on the floor near the heating stove. A well-worn book was propped against a pillow before him. He was mumbling to himself, "Popo —popocat — oh, such a hard word! I'll never be able to pronounce it. Why do they have to put such hard words in the geography book anyway?"

"What's the matter, George?" asked his father, who was sitting nearby, reading.

"These names in my geography book are too hard. Look at this one." He rose to his knees and handed the book to his father, pointing at the word. "It's some mountain in Mexico."

Mr. Bontrager studied the word, then slowly pronounced it. "Po-po-kat-uh-pet-uhl." His voice accented "pet."

"Po-po-kat-uh-pet-uhl," said George, stopping at each syllable.

"That's right," encouraged Father, handing the textbook back to his son.

George repeated the word over and over. "Well, it's not so bad after all," he con-

cluded. "But I wish they would not have any long words in the lessons. It's the long ones that are hard. I could pronounce the short ones easily."

"I'm not so sure of that," said Father, taking off his glasses and resting them on the arm of his rocking chair. "Some of the hardest words I have ever seen are also the shortest."

George was baffled. "Do you mean some French or Spanish words?"

"No, I mean English. But they are just as hard to say in other languages, too. The word I have in mind has only two letters, yet very few children, or men either, can say it."

"Only two letters!" exclaimed George. "Whatever can it be?"

"The hardest word," replied Father, "that I have ever met in any language is this little word of two letters — N-O, NO."

"Now you're just teasing me," cried George. "That is the easiest word in all the world to say." And to prove that his father was mistaken, he repeated, "No, no, no, no," a great many times.

"I am not joking at all," said Father, when George had finished his long row of

"No's." "I think it is one of the hardest of all words. It may seem easy to you tonight, but there will come a time when it will be very hard for you to say."

"I'll never forget how to say an easy word like that," insisted George. "Maybe I will forget to say the name of that mountain in Mexico, but I'll never forget how to say 'No.'"

In the morning George went to school. As he passed the Miller farm, he noticed that there was ice on their pond. "It must have been colder than I thought," he told himself. "Maybe by tomorrow it will be strong enough to hold a person."

The talk that noon at school was about the ice forming on the Miller's pond. Some boys thought that since it felt colder, maybe they could slide on the pond after school.

As soon as school was out the boys all ran to the pond. Some of them wanted to try the ice, while others came merely to see it.

"Come on, George," called William Lehman, as he slid about on the ice close to the edge. "Now we'll have a fine time sliding."

George hesitated. He did not believe the ice was strong enough, for it had been frozen only one night. His father had told him repeatedly never to venture onto a pond until after the second cold night.

"Hurry up, George," cried another of his classmates. "I know it is strong enough. I have seen it freeze over in one night many a time, haven't you, John?"

"Sure," answered John Helmuth. "It did one night last winter, and it wasn't as cold as last night, either."

But George still hesitated. He knew his father would not approve of their going on the ice.



"George is afraid," shouted John. "He's afraid he might slip and hurt himself."

"Or the ice might crack," added another. "The noise would frighten him."

"He's a chicken," giggled Perry Coblentz, as he slid alongside one of the older boys.

George could stand it no longer, for he was rather proud of his courage. "I am not afraid," he shouted, and ran onto the ice to join the carefree boys.

The ice seemed splendid for sliding, and the boys enjoyed the sport very much. More boys kept coming onto the ice as they saw the fun the others were having, sliding and trying to catch each other on the smooth surface. There was no longer any thought of danger.

Then suddenly there was a loud crack and the cry, "The ice has broken! The ice has broken!"

Sure enough, farther out on the pond three boys had broken through the ice and were struggling in the water. One of them was George.

Farmer Miller had heard the noise of the boys at play and was coming to call them from the ice, just as they broke through. Quickly he tore some boards from the

fence close by and shoved them out on the ice until they were within reach of the boys in the water. He succeeded in getting the three boys safely out, but not before they were nearly numb with cold.

George's father and mother were very alarmed when he was brought home, bundled in a blanket and his teeth chattering. After hearing that he had nearly drowned, they were so grateful he had been rescued that they did not think to ask what he had been doing on the ice.

But after supper, when the whole family was gathered around the kitchen stove, his father asked him, "George, what were you doing on the ice?"

George studied the cracks between the boards on the floor for a long minute. "I —I was sliding with John and William," he stammered. "There were a lot of other boys on the pond, too."

Mr. Bontrager looked very displeased. "You know that every winter I have told you to stay off the pond until after the second hard freeze," he said. "Why did you disobey me?"

"Really, Father, I didn't want to go. The boys made me," George said lamely.

"They made you? What do you mean?"

"They just made me."

"How did they make you? Did they take hold of you and drag you onto the ice?" asked Father sternly.

"No," admitted George. "They didn't drag me but they kept asking me to come."

"Why didn't you just say 'No.'?"

George hung his head. "I was going to, but then Perry Coblentz called me a chicken. I couldn't stand that."

"And so," said his father, "you found it easier to run the risk of losing your life than to say that little word you thought was so easy last night." Father Bontrager stared his young son in the eyes. "You could not say 'No.'"

Dare to Say No

Boys and girls, you are sometimes led
Into sorrow, sin, and woe,
Because you have not the courage quite
And dare not answer, NO.

When playmates tell you this or that,
"It's very nice to do."
See first what mother says, or if
You think it's wrong, say, "No."

Be always gentle, but firm,
And wheresoe'er you go,
If you're asked to do what's wrong
Don't fear to answer "No."

False friends may laugh and sneer at you,
Temptations round you flow,
But prove yourself both brave and true,
And firmly tell them, "No."

Sometimes a thing that's not a sin
You might be asked to do—
But when you think it's not best
Don't yield, but answer "No."

True friends will honor you the more,
Ah, yes, and false ones, too,
When they have learned you're not afraid
To stand and answer, "No."

And when temptations rise within
And plead to come or go,
And do a wrong, "for just this once"
Be sure you answer No.

For when you once have done a wrong,
The right receives a blow—
And wrong will triumph easier now,
So haste and answer No.

There's many a boy and girl
And man and woman, too,
Have gone to ruin and to death
For want of saying "No."

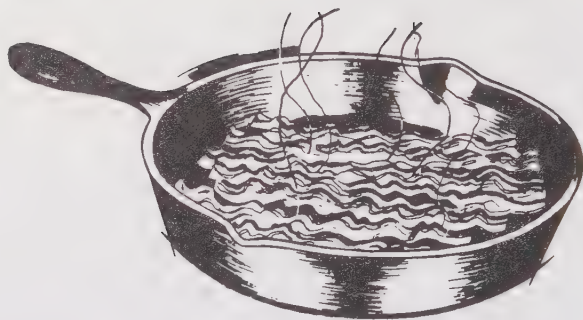
So young and old, or great or small
Don't fail what'er you do
To stand for right and nobly dare
To speak an honest "No."

- Author Unknown

Plain, Ordinary Food

"Mom, what can we have in our lunches today?" asked Rachel, from the sink where she was washing her hands. She had just come in from milking and knew her next chore was packing the school lunches.

"I saved three hamburger patties from dinner yesterday," answered Mom, going to the pantry to get them. "You can have



hamburger sandwiches and cookies and fruit. There's celery in the pantry, too, if you care for some."

Rachel sighed. "Just the plain, ordinary stuff," she grumbled to herself. "Why didn't we remember to fix something special, like mixed fruit salad, last night. Yesterday Esther Miller had peaches and pineapples set in jello. Just seeing hers made me hungry for some, too."

"We don't have mixed fruit salad for you today," said Mom. "And we can't have it very often either. Pineapples and jello don't grow in our orchard like peaches and apples and plums do, and we have to be careful how many things we buy out of the store. Just plain peaches are good, too."

"But we have them all the time," protested Rachel. "I wish we had something different for a change."

"Well, then open a can of strawberries today," said Mom. "We have plenty of those."

"We had strawberries yesterday."

Mom raised her eyebrows. "You just got done saying you have peaches every day," she reminded Rachel.

"Well, it's either peaches or strawberries," said Rachel, sounding anything but happy.

"Or pears or plums or blueberries," finished Mom. "There is no reason for you to be complaining when you have six different fruits to choose from. If you really want a change, you could open a can of applesauce today. I'll put a little jar of cream in your bucket for you to share with the boys. Applesauce and cream with cookies is a treat any day."

"Oh, Mom, not at school," scoffed Rachel. "The other girls would think we're funny people for sure, if we ate something like that at school."

Before Mother had time to answer, Rachel disappeared down the cellar steps. Glancing at the long rows of canned food on the shelves, she tried to make up her mind. "We haven't had plums for a while,

so I guess we'll have some today," she decided.

Five minutes later Rachel had filled the fruit containers and was getting ready to make sandwiches for herself and her two school-aged brothers. "I wish we had store-bought buns," she said wistfully. "This bread isn't very fresh and it crumbles to pieces."

"There is nothing wrong with that bread," Mom said, her voice sounding a bit impatient. "I just baked it on Monday. There are a lot of people in the world who would think themselves very fortunate if they had the bread you are complaining about."

Rachel didn't answer, but she didn't take to heart what Mom said either. This wasn't the first time Mom had reminded her of the many hungry people in the world. It seemed to her Mom brought up the subject every time one of the children said something about their food not being as good as they thought it should be.

Rachel cut three pieces of bread from the loaf, trying to make the slices as even as possible. She spread them with butter and placed the meat patties on top. "As if

we could make nice sandwiches with bread that is flat and meat patties that are round," she muttered.

Rachel remembered the huge picture of a hamburger in front of a drive-in restaurant in town. When she compared those hamburgers with cheese dripping from them with the one she was preparing for her lunch, hers didn't seem like much of a sandwich.

It was the same way with the cookies Rachel put into the lunch buckets. There wasn't anything wrong with how they tasted. Rachel enjoyed biting into the soft cookie and letting it melt slowly in her mouth. "Buttermilk cookies" — that's what Mom called them. But Rachel had another name for them — just plain ordinary cookies.

"Mom, when these cookies are all gone, let's have some sandwich cookies from the store for a change," said Rachel. "A lot of the other children have them and they make me hungry."

"You're always hungry for the things other people have," Mom said. "At the same time the other girls are probably hungry for the things you have."

"Huh, fat chance of that," grunted Rachel

to herself. "Who'd get hungry for the plain, ordinary food we have at this house?"

Rachel became more and more discontented with what she called "plain ordinary food." As often as she was allowed to, she fixed something special for the school lunches. This might have been anything from fruit set in jello or vanilla pudding topped with candy marshmallows to "ordinary" buttermilk cookies covered with pink frosting and colored sugar.

Even with these extras, Rachel wasn't satisfied with the food her family provided for her. When they had canned peas, thick with a white cream sauce, she wished they had frozen peas from the store. She remembered from the few times they had had them that they were much greener and tasted almost like the fresh peas from the garden. She didn't appreciate canned meat, because she knew fresh meat tasted better. And she slipped out of eating canned green beans whenever she could. "Ugh, they're so soft," she complained when she had to eat them. "Why shouldn't they be soft? They were cooked three hours when we canned them."

Rachel didn't complain when they had soup for supper once in a while, but when they had it two evenings in a row, she did. "Soup, soup, soup!" she said on one such evening. "I'm sure our family eats more soup than all the rest of the neighbors put together."

"Now, Rachel," said Dad, who had come in just in time to hear Rachel's grumbling. "I have half a notion to send you upstairs and let you do without supper tonight. It might do you good to go hungry."

Rachel rapidly put the silverware on the table. Her heart hammered against her ribs. "I'm hungry now already," she thought. "I was hungry when I came home from school, and all Mom let me eat was an apple."

Dad was talking again. "You wouldn't like to be sent upstairs without any supper, would you?"

Rachel shook her head. Tears were pushing at her downcast eyes.

"So you're ready to admit that soup is better than nothing, aren't you?" Dad questioned.

"I guess," said Rachel.

Dad picked up Baby Edna from the floor

and put her on the high chair. "Do you know what Granddad used to tell us children when we didn't want to eat the food our parents put on our plates?"

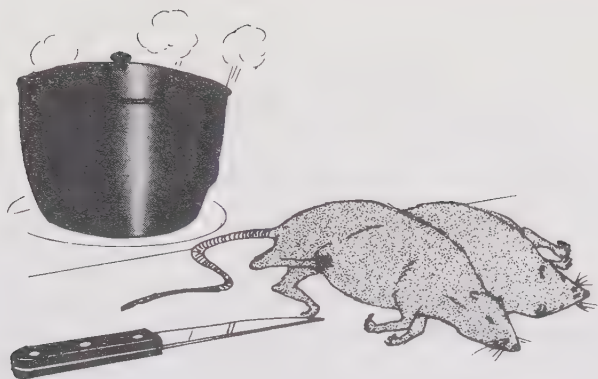
Rachel shook her head. Dad often told stories about his grandfather, who had made his home with Dad's family when he was a little boy.

"What did he say?" asked ten-year-old Roman, who never tired of hearing stories.

"He used to remind us how it went with our forefathers in Europe, just before they came to America," said Dad. "There was a war in the country and the soldiers came and took everything they had stored away for the winter, plus all their cows and chickens and other animals. When the soldiers had left, there was no food for the people. They got so hungry, they actually went out and hunted field rats. They were very thankful when they had even that to eat."

Rachel felt her stomach grow tight. "Ugh! Rats," she said, shaking herself at the thought.

"I read about that in the book, The Lord Is My Shepherd," said Rachel's brother Dan. "Dawdy Graber was one of the people



who ate rats."

"I wouldn't eat rats," said Rachel forcefully. "I'd do without food before I ate rats."

"If you got hungry enough, you'd eat anything without complaining about it," Dad said soberly. "More than one of our forefathers remembered going to bed and crying because of hunger pains. And it wasn't that they had just skipped one meal. They were fortunate if they got one meal a day."

"That happened long, long ago, didn't it?" Roman asked.

"It did, but that doesn't mean it couldn't happen again," said Dad. Then seeing the worried look in Roman's eyes, he added, "We hope it won't happen. Worrying about

it won't help matters any. But I know one thing. If the time ever comes when we don't have enough to eat, we'll think back to the days when we had potato soup and homemade bread. And it will bring tears to our eyes — tears of regret for not having appreciated our riches while we had them."

The family gathered around the table and bowed their heads for prayer before eating. As Rachel closed her eyes, she saw the shelves after shelves of canned food they had in the basement. She saw the cows she helped milk every morning and evening, and the several hundred hens that laid eggs for family use, and to sell to the customers who stopped at the farm. She thought of the big bags of groceries Dad and Mom brought home from the store, and the garden and the orchard and the surrounding fields, all of which helped in one way or another to provide the family with food. But when she stopped to think seriously about it, she knew there wasn't a single thing that soldiers couldn't take away or destroy.

Several minutes later Rachel sat and thoughtfully blew the steam that arose from

her plate of hot potato soup. She breathed deeply and tried to enjoy the smell of onions mingled with potatoes. And tonight Mom had added little bits of meat, too. What if field rats were the only meat they could get?

Rachel felt her stomach tighten again. She simply wasn't hungry — not because the soup wasn't good enough, but because she realized how ungrateful she had been for the good food they enjoyed every day.



The Empty Water Jug

Joni Troyer was on his knees in the cucumber field. He straightened his aching back and wiped his forehead dry with his shirt sleeve. The sweat drops kept getting into his eyes.

Sammy was picking in the next row. "Whew," Joni sighed wearily. "I wish Dad and Uncle Andy would never have planted these old pickles."

As Sammy bent over, his hat tumbled off. He picked it up and pulled it down tightly over his head. "That's what I say," he agreed.

At the far end of the field the rest of the family was picking, and also Uncle Andy and his boys. Uncle Andy, for some reason or other, always claimed his boys could pick faster if they picked near him.

"I think it was all Uncle Andy's idea," grumbled Joni.

"Maybe so, but must be Dad thought it was a good idea," Sammy grinned and got up to empty his full pail. "Just think of all the money this will mean."

Joni's pail was not quite full, but he stood

up anyway. He rubbed his hands together and frowned. His fingers were black and green, and felt very dry. Picking cucumbers was hard on the hands.

"I'm thirsty," announced Joni, grabbing his partly-filled pail and starting after Sammy. "I might as well empty my pail and get a drink."

The two boys carried their pails toward the shade tree near the road. A car rattled past, raising white dust behind it. The dust drifted across the cucumber field. As the dust cleared, the boys could see heat waves shimmering again above the gravel road.

Joni grabbed the water jug, but it was empty. "The water's all gone," he called out to Dad, who was picking not far away. "May I run home and fill the jug?"

"Elmer and Ruth may go," Dad said. The twins had been helping him, but they were too young to pick very many cucumbers. They were only five years old.

"Goody, let's go, Ruth," Elmer shouted. They came running for the water jug.

"But I wanted to go myself," mumbled Joni in a low voice. Then he spoke more loudly to the twins, "Are you sure you're

brave enough to go home all alone? There's nobody at home, you know."

"We don't care. What is there to be afraid of?" replied Elmer.

But Ruth was not too sure. She hung back and looked questioningly at the boys. "Is there... is there anything to be afraid of?" she asked.

"Nothing much," Sammy teased her. "Only bears and tigers and maybe a wild elephant."

"Come on, Pokey," Elmer called to Ruth. She ran to catch up with him. The two trotted up the road toward home, which was a quarter mile distant. The water jug swung between them.

"I hope they hurry," said Joni. "I'm really thirsty."

"Me, too," said Sammy.

Slowly they started back to their rows.

It seemed like only a few minutes when Sammy looked around and said, "Joni, the twins are coming back already. They are running like everything. I didn't think Elmer would get in such a hurry."

"Let's go get a drink then," said Joni.

From all over the patch, tired and

thirsty pickers headed for the shade tree. Uncle Andy and Willie and Harry and Ernest. Dad and Mom and Millie.

As the twins came running toward them, Joni and Sammy could hear Ruth crying. Elmer was carrying the water jug, but he was swinging it as if it were empty.

"I don't believe they got any water." There was disgust in Joni's voice.

Sammy nodded. "Something scared them. The babies," he said.

Soon everyone was gathered around the twins beneath the shade tree. "What's wrong?" asked Mom anxiously. "What happened?"

"Yes, why didn't you fill the water jug?" asked Sammy.

Elmer's face still looked frightened, and Ruth was sobbing, all out of breath. At last Elmer started to explain. "You know up by...up by the apple trees, just before we got to our lane..." He paused, breathing hard. He and Ruth had run fast.

"Yes?" asked Dad.

"Ruth saw it first, in the weeds, in the orchard."

"What?" Joni asked impatiently.

"Yes, what did you see? A wild ele-

phant?" asked Sammy.

Mom looked sternly at Joni and Sammy, and they were quiet.

Elmer struggled on. "I don't know what it was, but it was black. And it sat there by the apple tree, looking at us. Maybe... Maybe it was a bear. It looked like a bear."

Joni and Sammy winked at Uncle Andy's boys, and the cousins winked back.

"I don't think it was a bear," Dad said. "There aren't any bears this far south in Michigan."

"Well, someone ought to go get us some drinking water," declared Uncle Andy.

"I'll go," offered Joni. "I'm not afraid of Elmer's bear." He grinned at his cousins.

Ruth spoke at last. "I..I don't think it was a bear, but it was as big as a bear, a black one, and it had a big wide mouth." She blinked her eyes.

Elmer still clung to the water jug. "Here, give me the jug," Joni said, pulling on the handle. "May I go, Dad?"

"I guess so, but hurry back," said Dad. "We want to finish picking these cucumbers before too late."

"Wait a minute," called out Cousin Willie. He came running with a heavy stick and handed it to Joni. "Take this along for protection against that bear." He smiled.

"You need a slingshot, like David, the shepherd boy," said Harry. The cousins laughed and Joni and Sammy joined them.

"Boys," said Uncle Andy, "that is enough. Don't make fun of the twins."

Dad and Mom were talking together. "But maybe it was a dog with rabies," said Mom.

"Oh, hardly," said Dad, "but if you want, Sammy can go along, too. It won't take them long."

"Good," said Sammy, running after Joni. "Bear meat for supper. Just think!"

II. A Second Scare

Joni and Sammy trotted along the road toward home, laughing and chatting about the twins and their bear. Joni still gripped the big stick and swung it around. "I'll just crack him over the head and knock him out, and you can run and get the butcher knife, Sammy," he joked.

"No, I'll grab him by the tail and hang

on till you get the knife," returned Sammy.

They were nearing the orchard, so they slowed down. "Let's slip up quietly. We don't want to frighten him away," said Joni.

"Anyhow, what do you think they saw, really?" Sammy asked, his voice sounding serious for the first time.

"Hard to guess. Probably their own shadow."

But as they drew alongside the orchard, they fell silent and looked closely into the tall weeds beneath the trees. Suddenly Sammy stiffened and said, "There...there it is!"

"Where?" asked Joni.

"There under the apple tree, right where Elmer said."

Joni could make out a black object now. It did look a little like a bear, but of course, that was impossible.

Sammy crept forward to get a better view. Then he burst out laughing. "Come up here, Joni," he called. "Here you can see the bear in plain sight."

Joni caught up with his brother. The black object did look like a bear, but it was easy to see that it was just a stump, noth-

ing more.

"It's the stump of that old apple tree we cut down last winter," said Sammy. "It's half hidden in the weeds, but I still can't see that the twins thought it was an animal. What an imagination!"

"They said it came toward them," chuckled Joni.

"And it had a big wide mouth!"

"I'm disappointed," laughed Joni. "We won't have any bear meat. We can't eat the stump of an old apple tree."

"Let's hurry and fill this water jug," said Sammy. "I can't wait to get back and tell the cousins. Won't we tease the twins, though?"

"Scaredy cats, that's what they are." Joni carried the water jug and led the way to the pump at the windmill. There was no wind blowing, so they had to pump by hand.

They took turns getting a drink, then they filled the jug. At last they were ready to start back.

"Let's go through the orchard, so we can tell the other boys we touched the sleepy old bear," suggested Sammy.

They slipped through the fence and pushed down the tall grass as they walked

toward the old apple stump. Joni carried his stick, and he beat at the grass from side to side. "Shoo, shoo, Buster Bear," he cried out.

When they reached the stump, Joni slammed the stick across it. "Now the bear's dead," he said.

"We'd better get back to the field with the water," Sammy said.

They started on the shortcut for the road, pushing their way through the grass. "A good place for a bear to hide, all right," puffed Joni.

He paused to rest, and Sammy also stopped for a moment. It was then that they heard a slight noise behind them, a rustling in the grass. Both boys turned to look.

Following in their tracks was a huge black bulldog they had never seen before. The big animal was sniffing at their tracks, then came a step closer. The boys could not tell whether the dog was friendly or not.

"We'd better get out of here," whispered Joni in a frightened voice.

"He might have rabies," Sammy said, but Joni was already running, throwing his



stick away. The water splashed from his jug as he ran through the grass. Sammy set out after him, but then glanced back at the dog.

The black bulldog was following them!

Joni and Sammy ran and stumbled through the thick grass. Joni fell headlong and poured most of the water out of the jug. In an instant he was on his feet again, running. Sammy was on his heels.

They scrambled through the barbwire fence. Sammy caught his shirt and tore a long gash in it. As they jumped the road

ditch, there was a gruff "Woof!" behind them at the fence. Joni flung the water jug into the ditch, and in a moment the two boys were tearing full speed down the gravel road.

The cucumber pickers saw them coming. They were alarmed and came quickly to meet them. "What happened?" Dad asked. "What is it?"

Joni and Sammy collapsed on the ground, gasping for breath. Uncle Andy and the cousins came running and surrounded them.

"Was it a bear after all?" asked Willie.

"N-no," stammered Joni, already beginning to feel sheepish.

"It was a great big dog — a bulldog," explained Sammy.

"Did he bite you?" asked Elmer.

Before long the whole story was out. In fact, just as the boys finished telling it, Ruth called out, "There he goes!" She pointed toward the road.

It was true. The bulldog was trotting down the road, his ears forward. There was a leering grin on his face and the stump of his tail was wagging.

"That animal isn't sick," declared Uncle

Andy. "He doesn't have rabies. It looks to me he's lost, and he was looking for friends."

As if to prove his words, a pickup truck came roaring up from the opposite direction, slowed down, and slid to a stop beside the dog. A big man jumped out of the truck. His voice carried to the pickle patch. "Oh, there you are at last, Butch. I thought I'd never find you. Where have you been hiding?"

The big dog was overjoyed to see his master. He jumped up to lick his face with his tongue. Then at a whistle and a command from his master, he jumped into the back of the truck. The pickup started rapidly off, and the dust lifted high.

"There goes your bear, Elmer," said Cousin Harry.

Mom saw Sammy's torn shirt, and the cousins suddenly remembered that they were still thirsty.

"Where's the water jug?" asked Uncle Andy.

"It's down there in the ditch somewhere," Joni answered, looking at his feet.

"Shall we try again?" asked Dad, a slow smile on his face. "Maybe I ought to go

myself this time."

"Oh, I'm not afraid now," said Elmer. "Ruth and I can go get the water, if the boys will tell us where the jug is."

"Maybe that would be all right," Dad agreed. "I have a feeling Joni and Sammy would like to get back to picking cucumbers, and quit talking about bears and bulldogs. Am I right, boys?"

Without looking up, Joni and Sammy knew their father was smiling.

Mom pulled out a safety pin from her dress pocket. "Sammy, come here and let me pin your shirt, or you'll get sunburned," she said.

What Love Will Do

Susie Miller took the stack of plates from the cupboard and counted them. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven. Then she remembered that her oldest brother was working at the sawmill and had packed his lunch, so she put the last plate back.

Before carrying the plates to the table,

Susie restacked them, putting the nicest one on top. She wanted that one. There really wasn't that much difference in any of them, but three of the plates had been damaged by getting too hot. One of them even had a brown spot on it. Susie wanted to make extra sure she didn't get that plate.

Setting the plates in order, Susie turned to get the tumblers. "Mom, there aren't enough glasses," she said.

"That's because we didn't wash the breakfast dishes," Mom answered. "Get what you need from the cupboard over here." She pointed to the place where the Sunday dishes were kept.

"I need only one more," Susie answered. She got a tumbler with a wheat design. "These are my favorite," she thought. She set the glass she had put at her place somewhere else and put the wheat design tumbler there instead.

A few minutes later the family had gathered at the dinner table. Susie enjoyed the meal very much, because being at home and having fried sausage and mashed potatoes for dinner was a once-a-week treat for her.

Susie paused in her eating to take a few sips of water from the pretty tumbler. Slowly she set the glass down again, glancing across the table to see if Henry, her brother-next-younger, would notice it.

He did.

"Hey, how come you have a pretty glass like that, and the rest of us just have ordinary ones?" he asked.

"Because there weren't enough clean glasses to go around, and Mom said I could get one out of the cupboard," Susie said.

"And Mom said you could take the pretty one for yourself." Henry's voice had a mocking tone to it.

"Oh, that just happened," said Susie's older sister. "She always 'happens' to get the nicest dishes when she sets the table."

"You're just jealous, that's what," Susie shot back.

"Let her go; she's the baby," Henry managed to say before Dad put a stop to the argument.

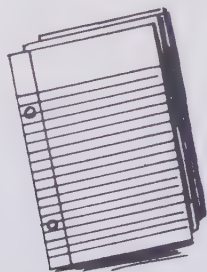
"Now, now," Dad rebuked, looking first at Susie and then at the rest of the children. For a moment it looked as if he didn't know what to say, then he said mildly, "Susie's just like the rest of us. She

gives the nicest things to the person she likes best."

The conversation turned to a safer subject, but Susie couldn't forget Dad's remark. She was still turning it over in her mind half an hour later when she and her sister were washing the dishes. "She gives the nicest things to the person she likes best." The words didn't make sense to Susie, so she tried to forget them.

Susie's habit of claiming the nicest and the best for herself showed up in other places besides at home. The next week one morning she happened to come to school a little earlier than usual. None of the other girls were there yet, so Susie went to chat with Teacher Clara. To her surprise, she found nine spiral notebooks stacked on the class table.

"What are these for?" Susie asked eagerly.



"I'm trying to find ways to keep the fourth and fifth graders busy," smiled the teacher. "We're going to have writing lessons. Every morning I'll try to have a poem or a short story on the board for you to copy into those notebooks. Then you may add a freehand picture to go with the lessons. I think you'll have very interesting books by the end of the term.

Susie loved poems and the idea sounded like a very exciting one. Her eyes shone. She counted the notebooks and saw that there were enough for the fourth and fifth graders.

Susie flipped through the notebooks, trying to decide which color she would choose. There seemed to be three different colors — red, royal blue, and green. "I don't like red," she said, making a face. "I'm going to choose either a blue one or a green one."

Then she saw the bottom notebook. It was a lovely bright blue — the color of the sky on a clear day. "Oh-h-h, this one is pretty," she exclaimed. "May I have it?"

Teacher Clara hesitated. "You like that one, do you?"

Susie nodded. "May I have it, since I

asked for it first?"

"I guess," Teacher Clara smiled. "I guess we'll let each pupil choose as he comes to school. But it's not really the color of the notebook that's going to make it interesting, but what you put into it."

"Yes, I know," Susie said quickly, carrying the pretty notebook to her desk. She felt pleased, but just a little guilty. "What will the other girls say when they find out I have the nicest one?" she wondered. But then she thought, "I was here first, so I got first choice."

When the other girls came to school, Susie didn't waste any time telling them about the new notebooks. She urged them to decide what color they wanted before their favorite ones were all taken.

"What color did you take?" asked Amanda, who was also in the fourth grade.

"I have this one. There was only one like it." Susie showed them the bright blue notebook.

"I wish I would have been first," said Amanda. "That one is really pretty."

"You'll probably make yours nicer on the inside," Susie comforted her friend. "That's the part that counts the most anyway."

"Then why did you pick the nicest one?" asked Amanda's older sister, who was in the seventh grade.

Susie didn't answer. She felt her face get hot. "She's jealous," she thought bitterly.

After that no one made any more remarks about Susie's notebook, and life at school went on as before. Susie tried to do her writing neatly, and to find time to draw a picture into the notebook each day. She wanted the nicest notebook, both on the outside and the inside.

Meanwhile, there were other choices to make in school. Many of them were just simple ones, such as deciding who had to use the torn songbooks in the morning and who got to grade the first and second graders' workbooks. Susie never had to use a torn songbook when she passed them out, which was one reason she usually offered to do it. There were times when she felt a little guilty about checking the workbooks as often as she did, but she really enjoyed doing it. Therefore, she hurried with her work, then told Teacher Clara she didn't have anything to do. Then Teacher Clara often asked her to check the workbooks,

just as Susie had hoped she would.

II. Teacher Clara's Story

One day when the children came in from the playground after the noon period, Teacher Clara said, "I was looking through some old readers the other evening, thinking I could find some poems or essays for the fourth and fifth graders' notebooks. I came across a story that is too long for a writing lesson, but it contains a valuable lesson we can all learn from. I'm going to read it to you, then maybe we can have a little discussion afterwards.

The children settled down to listen, sighing with satisfaction. They didn't have storytime every day, so it was a special treat to have one.

"This story is about two brothers who lived long, long ago," Teacher Clara said before she started reading. "Their names are Amos and Boaz."

The minute Susie heard the name "Boaz," she pictured a man from Bible times. And when Teacher Clara started to read the story of two brothers who worked side by side in their field, the picture in her mind

grew. She could almost see Amos and Boaz preparing the land, using their crude shovels. Then they planted the wheat seeds by hand. Susie pictured them with a bag hanging from their shoulder, scattering the seeds as they slowly walked up and down the fields.

The story went on. The brothers waited for the harvest — waited through the autumn rains and winter snows. In the spring they rejoiced to see their wheat field turn green. Once more rains blessed the land and the sun warmed it. The wheat grew and little by little it ripened.

Then came the day when Amos and Boaz decided the wheat was ready to harvest. They sharpened their hand sickles and set to work. SWISH! Down went the wheat. SWISH! SWISH! SWISH! The brothers could not keep cutting wheat all day. They had to stop and tie into sheaves what they had cut. They could not let the precious grain lying on the ground overnight.

Amos and Boaz laid down their sickles and gathered up the wheat, tying it in bundles. The sweat poured from their foreheads, but they kept right on working. At last they were done for the day. They

counted the sheaves and divided them between themselves, half and half.

The brothers went home, each to his tent. That night Amos lay on his mat, thinking about the golden wheat they were harvesting. Truly, God had been good to them by giving them such a good crop. Then his thoughts turned to his brother Boaz. "He has his wife and his little children, and he will need more grain during the coming year," he thought. "I have only myself, and I do not need as much as he does. It is not fair that we divided the grain half and half."

The more Amos thought about it, the more concerned he felt for his brother's family. At last he got up, stole out into the darkness and walked to the harvest field. There was his share of the sheaves on one side of the field, and Boaz's on the other side. Amos picked up all the sheaves he could carry and took them over to his brother's side of the field. He piled them with Boaz's sheaves.

"There, that's the way the sheaves should have been divided in the first place," he thought. Then he returned to his mat in the tent, feeling happy and con-



tented. He slept soundly all night.

While Amos was sleeping, Boaz lay awake on his mat in his tent. He, too, was thinking about the harvest. Soon his thoughts turned to his brother, Amos. "Poor Amos," thought Boaz. "He has no one but himself. I have my loving wife and these little children. When I am old and no longer able to take care of myself, my sons and daughters will care for me. Amos will have to pay someone to take care of him."

The more Boaz thought about it, the more he felt Amos should have more than half of the grain they harvested. Finally he got up during the night, stole out into the dark-

ness, and carried a good many of his sheaves over to the other side of the field and piled them with Amos's sheaves.

Susie sat up. The story was really getting interesting. What would the brothers say the next morning when they met? She smiled across the aisle at Amanda. Amanda smiled back. She was enjoying the story, too.

Teacher Clara's voice rose and fell as the story went on. The brothers worked side by side again the next day. At sundown they divided their sheaves, half and half. But as soon as it got dark Amos went back to the field and once more carried a big armful of sheaves over to Boaz's side. He had no sooner left the field than Boaz came out and carried an armful of sheaves to Amos's side.

The children in the classroom giggled. Teacher Clara paused long enough to smile, then she read on.

The next night Amos went out to give Boaz some of his sheaves again. Halfway across the field he heard a noise. Through the darkness he saw the figure of a man. He was carrying something. Amos strained his eyes to see better. The other

man had stopped and was evidently trying to figure out what he was seeing. Then Amos heard a voice call softly, "Amos!"

Amos answered, "Boaz!" The two brothers dropped their sheaves and ran to each other, weeping for joy. They both realized what the other had been doing, and their unselfishness was proof that they loved each other better than they loved themselves. Was it any wonder they fell into each other's arms, weeping for joy?

Teacher Clara put down the book. For a long moment no one in the classroom moved. Susie looked up and saw a strange dampness around her teacher's eyes. Her voice didn't quite sound natural as she asked, "How many of us have proved by our actions that we love others better than ourselves?"

Not a single person raised his hand.

"What could Amos and Boaz have done, had they been selfish and wanted more than their share of the grain?" the teacher asked.

A third grader raised his hand. "They could have gone out and taken grain from each other," he said.

"That's right," said Teacher Clara. "Do

you think the story would have had such a happy ending then?"

The children all shook their heads.

"Do you think they could have worked peacefully side by side, if each one had been afraid the other one would get more than his share?" asked Teacher Clara.

Susie scarcely heard the rest of the discussion. She had already heard enough to make her think about claiming the prettiest notebook for herself, about grading papers oftener than anyone else, about putting the prettiest dishes at her place when she set the table, and about doing things she wanted to do, no matter how much she pushed others back.

Susie's thoughts went back to a certain Saturday — the time Dad had rebuked her and her brother and sister for arguing at the dinner table. "She gives the nicest things to the person she likes best," he had said. At the time the words hadn't made sense, but after Teacher Clara's story, they did. What Dad was really trying to tell her was that she was selfish, loving herself more than she loved others.

When it really came down to the point, Susie knew taking the best for herself didn't make her happy. She always had to feel a little guilty and afraid the others wouldn't like her because of it. That feeling was quite different from the one Amos and Boaz had when they met in the darkness that night.

"Loving others better than self made Amos and Boaz happy, and it will do the same for us," Teacher Clara was saying as she picked up her spelling book to get back to classes. Susie looked up, glad that she had heard that part of the discussion. She was ready to see what loving others would do for her.

Two Seeds

I hid a selfish little thought,
 To think and think about.
I did not know it would be caught,
 Or ever be found out,
But it was like a little seed,
 And it began to sprout!
It grew into a little weed,
 And blossomed in a pout!

I hid another little thought,
 'Twas pleasant, sweet, and kind;
So, if this time it should be caught,
 I knew I shouldn't mind.
I thought about it, hour by hour,
 'Twas growing all the while,
It blossomed in a lovely flower,
 A happy little smile!

- Author Unknown

Caught in a Trap

Laverne Wagler sat back in his seat and frowned. "This just doesn't make sense," he grumbled to himself, staring at the page of long division problems he had to do. "I don't know how to get the trial divisor. In fact, I barely know what a trial divisor is."

Laverne raised his hand for help, then put it back down. Marie Lehman, the teacher, had just started reading fifth-grade answers, and no one was supposed to ask for help while Marie was having another class. He studied the problem again and tried to work it, but when he multiplied and wrote the answer under the first three numbers in the dividend, he couldn't subtract. The number he had written down was bigger

than the one he was supposed to subtract from.

Glancing across the aisle at his friend Henry, Laverne saw that Henry had already worked the first row. Laverne felt desperate. He and Henry always raced to get their work done and now Henry already had a big lead on him.

Suddenly Laverne thought of a plan. It wasn't a really good one, but it would at least help him get started. He flipped to the answers in the back of the book. When he had found the right page, he glanced around to make sure no one was looking. Everyone seemed to be busy, so he stole a quick look at the answers. He saw that the answer to the first problem was "24," so he waited a little while, then wrote down the "2" and multiplied. He subtracted, wrote down the "4" and multiplied again. Sure enough, the problem worked out just right.

From then on it was easier. Teacher Marie had told them they could check the first five problems to make sure they were doing them right. So all Laverne had to do was pretend to be checking his first answers, while all the time he was looking at

the next answer. But still, for some reason, he could never look at the answers in the back of the book without first checking to make sure no one was watching him. "Why should I feel guilty when no one knows I'm looking at the next answer?" he asked himself.

Laverne had the first row worked and was beginning on the second when suddenly the teacher was standing beside him. His heart skipped a beat. Was he caught already? He could not make himself look up. He just waited, his face red and his heart thumping against his ribs.

"A real good beginning, Laverne," Marie said, then went on to look at the problems of the pupils in front of him.

Relief flooded Laverne's whole being. He hadn't been caught at all. Teacher was just making a round to make sure the fourth graders were working their problems right. Why had he been so scared when he saw her beside him?

Laverne couldn't be relieved long. Even before Teacher Marie was back at her desk, he realized he was in a trap. He couldn't ask the teacher for help now, not after he had "worked" eight problems with-

out Marie's help, and she had said, "A real good beginning, Laverne."

The girl behind Laverne was having trouble with her problems and Marie came several times to help her. Each time Laverne tried hard to listen and to learn how to do the problems without using the answers in the back of the book, but he was afraid to turn around and watch. What if Marie asked him to show Esther how?

Laverne thought the only thing to do was to continue doing the problems his way. It was really a quick way of doing them and before long he noticed that he had caught up with Henry, and soon he was ahead of him. He had just finished the last problem when it was time for recess.

"How far are you?" Henry wanted to know.

"I'm done," Laverne said, feeling smug.

Henry was surprised. "How could you finish so fast?" he wanted to know. "I've got six more problems to do."

Laverne changed the subject. "Let's go play ping pong," he said.

The next day the girl behind Laverne had missed eight problems, so the teacher spent some time trying to help her. La-

verne had a hundred, so all she said to him was, "Very good, Laverne."

Laverne didn't feel "very good" about his score or about the praise Marie had given him. He still didn't know how to do his problems. And worse yet, he didn't dare ask. He didn't want his teacher to know he had been cheating. So when the new lesson was assigned Laverne did his problems the same way he had done the first page.

This went on for several days. Laverne depended on the answers in the back of the book to do his problems. At the end of the third day, he still didn't have any idea how to get the answers the right way. Meanwhile, the problems were getting harder, leaving Laverne more confused than ever.

The next day Teacher Marie got through her lessons sooner than usual. "We have a few more minutes until recess, so I'd like to have the fourth graders go to the blackboard," she said. "I want to see how fast you can divide."

Laverne saw the trap he had set for himself close, clutching him firmly in its grip. He wished company would come, or someone would have a very difficult arithmetic problem that would take up the rest of the

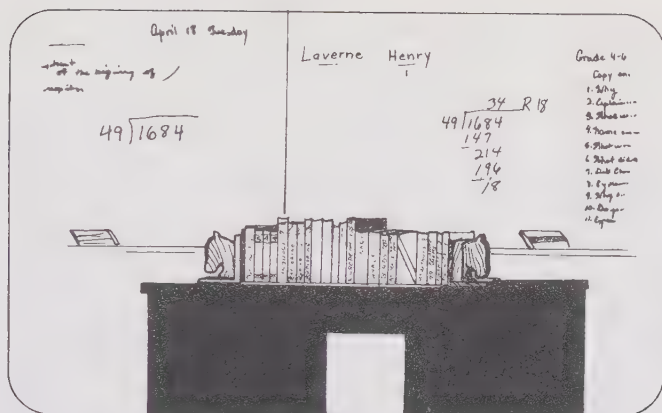
teacher's time until recess. However, nothing happened and the fourth graders went to the blackboard. "Let's choose up sides and have a race," Teacher Marie said.

"Yes, yes, let's," the children all said, except Laverne. They loved arithmetic races.

"Why don't we let the two boys choose. Then since they are the captains, they will race first." Marie paused, then said, "Laverne, you choose first."

Laverne tried to keep his head from spinning. He chose Anna, who was a whiz at arithmetic. Henry chose Lizzie, and then Laverne chose Freda and so on until the whole class was divided into two sides. Excited sighs were heard as the children took their places. "The first race is between Laverne and Henry," Marie said, opening her arithmetic book. "All right, divide 1684 by 49."

Laverne's hand trembled as he wrote down his problem, then stood and stared at it. He looked at his feet and back at his problem. He cleared his throat to keep from choking, and by that time Henry had worked the problem. Laverne hadn't done



anything except writing down a "4", and when he glanced at Henry's answer, he saw that even that was wrong.

"What's the matter, Laverne?" Marie asked, her voice full of sympathy. "Does racing make you nervous?"

Laverne forced a laugh as he took his seat while Henry marked a score at the top of the blackboard and did the same thing. The girl on Laverne's side won the next race, but Laverne barely noticed. What would Marie think? Would she really think he was nervous only because they had been racing?

At the end of four races, the score was tied. "We have time for one more race,"

Marie said. "We'll leave it up to the captains. Laverne and Henry may come to the blackboard for the final race."

Laverne's legs felt like wood as he walked toward the blackboard. Once more he copied the problem, then made a brave attempt to solve it. But how could he get the right answer if he didn't even know how? What was the use of pretending? He was caught — firmly caught in a trap he had set for himself.

Somehow Laverne managed to get back to his seat. He wasn't a bit surprised when he heard Teacher Marie say, "I want to see Laverne at recess. The rest are dismissed."

Marie didn't seem in any hurry as she cleared off her desk and got things in order. To Laverne, it seemed as if recess should be about over when she finally took notice of him sitting in his desk. "Well, what do you have to say for yourself?" she asked.

Laverne couldn't have answered if he had known what to say. His lips quivered and his throat felt dry.

"Why didn't you work the problems at the blackboard?"

"I — I didn't know how."

"How could you work pages of them before, when you didn't know how?"

Laverne stared at the floor and didn't answer.

"You were using the answers in the back of the book," Marie said, not a bit of doubt in her voice.

Laverne still stared at the floor, listening to the loud ticking of the clock. It seemed to be keeping time with the thumping of his heart.

"Bring me your arithmetic book," Marie said.

Laverne took his book from his desk. He knew what was going to happen, and the strange part about it was that he didn't care. He was glad. With his answers stapled shut, he wouldn't be tempted to look at them.

"Clip! Clip! Clip!" The teacher's stapler never sounded as loud to Laverne as it did at that minute. Finally the job was finished and Marie handed the book back. "Now go to the blackboard and we'll work a few problems the right way."

Perhaps it was because Laverne tried extra hard. Perhaps it was because Marie

took easy problems to start in with, and went to extra pains to explain them. At any rate, Laverne soon understood his problems and worked several without any help.

"I want you to start right here on page 133 and do every problem on every page up to page 140," Teacher Marie said. "Keep working on them in your spare time until you've caught up with all the work you missed." She paused, as if not sure what she should say next. "I guess I'll let you off with that, but if this happens again you won't get off this easily."

Laverne sighed, feeling more relieved than he had for a long time. He looked up at Marie and managed a smile. "It won't happen again," he promised.

Several minutes later Laverne had put his arithmetic book away and was out on the playground. He wanted to run, to shout, to play as he had never played before. "With all the work I have to do, I don't know why I feel so free," he thought to himself. But after thinking it over, he knew why he was so relieved. He had been caught in his own trap, but now he was free. And on top of that, he knew how to do his problems with-

out cheating. Laverne discovered that he actually looked forward to doing his problems.

The Prisoner

You have a little prisoner,
He's nimble, sharp, and clever,
He's sure to get away from you
Unless you watch him ever.

And when he once gets out, he makes
More trouble in an hour
Than you can stop in many a day
Working with all your power.

He gets your playmates by the ears,
He says what isn't so,
And uses many ugly words
Not good for you to know.

Quick fasten tight the ivory gates,
And chain him while he's young!
For this most dangerous prisoner
Is just—your little tongue.

— Author Unknown

Be Careful

What You Say

In speaking of a person's faults
Pray don't forget your own,
Remember those in houses of glass
Should seldom throw a stone.

If we have nothing else to do
Than talk of those who sin
'Tis better to begin at home
And from that point begin.

Some may have faults — who does not?
The old as well as young,
Perhaps we may for aught we know
Have fifty to their one.

I'll tell you a better plan
And find it works full well
To try my own defects to cure
'Ere others' faults I tell.

And though I sometimes hope to be
No worse than some I know,
My own shortcomings bid me
Let the faults of others go.

Then let us all when we begin
To slander friend or foe
Think of the harm one word may do
To those we little know.

Unit Three

**THE WORLD
AROUND US**

THE GARDEN

The heart is the garden
Where thought flowers grow;
The thoughts that we think
Are the seeds that we sow.
Each kind loving thought
Bears a kind loving deed,
While a thought that is selfish
Is just like a weed.

We must watch what we think
The live long day,
And pull out the weed thoughts
And throw them away.
And plant loving deed thoughts
So thick in a row,
There there'll be no room
For weed thoughts to grow.

—Author Unknown



Players in Fur

One day last spring I found a new fox den in the woods, and since then it has been good fun to see the cubs playing games that look like versions of hide-and-seek, tag, king-of-the-castle, and several others we have no names for, all in a pleasant morning or afternoon.

How did I find it, you ask? Most fox dens are so well concealed that you must search a long while, and perhaps get a hound dog to help, before you find one; but this time I was not looking for dens or thinking of foxes. It happened that I was sitting on a log by a little brook, watching a pair of birds build their nest, when a mother fox

came trotting along as if she did not see me.

This old mother fox saw me plainly enough, as you might know by the crafty look in her eyes. But instead of running off she began to act in a queer way. It made me think of the pretty trick which a mother quail or a mother partridge plays to outwit you when you come near her brood of young chicks.

You know how these brave little mother birds act at such a time — how they deliberately throw themselves at your feet, clucking or squealing as if they were hurt, and how they flap along the ground as if they could not run or fly. They want you to follow, as I hope you always will, and when you do follow them they lead you away from where the chicks are hiding, and then —whirr-r-r! Away they go and are out of sight in a twinkling.

So it happened when the mother fox sat down, only a few yards away, and turned her back and scratched an ear with a hind foot, that I began for the first time to understand her. "She has been watching me," was my thought. "She must have a den near here, and she wants to lure me away

from it. Now let's keep still and see what she will do."

When I paid no attention to her ear-scratching — or when she thought so — the mother fox turned to face me and opened her mouth in a wide yawn, as your dog does when he wants you to do something, or as some people do when they are sleepy and forget their manners. Again she opened her mouth wide, showing all her sharp teeth and her slender red tongue, and this time I heard the low whine that goes with a yawn — eeee-ou-ow! When that failed to make me move she began to bark, or yap at me, like a small dog that is trying to tell what he thinks of you.

And then, of course, I had to notice a mother fox that was challenging in her own way, "Here I am; catch me if you can." Her ears were up and her eyes very bright as I rose to my feet, as if surprised. To please her I followed as she trotted away, catching a glimpse of yellow fur here or there, till we came to a great rocky ledge that rose above the tree tops like a mountain. When the mother fox was lost among the rocks I went back and found her den, only a little way from where the birds were

nest-building. You might know who dug that den by tracks in the fresh-turned earth; and if you put your nose down to the mouth of it a sniff would surely tell you that the cubs were inside.

After that it was very pleasant to learn that the daytime of a young fox (we don't know much about his nights) is divided into three parts — eating, sleeping, and playing. Eating takes but a few minutes; sleeping calls for three or four hours; the rest of every fine day, which means the largest part, is given to play or comedy. A comedy, as you know, is a play with fun or humor in it; and you don't have to watch fox cubs very long to know that they are happy little players.

A good time to watch the dens is in the early morning, before sunrise; for then you may sometimes see the mother fox come with a catch of field mice hanging from her pointed jaws. She makes no call or outcry; but somehow the cubs know she is coming, and out they tumble to meet her. The mother distributes the mice; each hungry little fellow getting his share, and in a moment it is gone. Never a scrap is left to tell what they have devoured. Fox

cubs seem to like mice better than any other food, and they never have enough; or so you think, seeing them gobble down a dozen and then go sniffing about as if hoping to find a few more.

Soon after breakfast the cubs go into the den; but except in a storm (when they all sleep the whole day long) the mother fox is not with them there. In pleasant weather she curls up on a rock or a stump to rest until sunset. She looks hungry, and no doubt she is; the best of her hunting goes to her cubs.

This latest den of mine, you should know, is in a secluded bank, within sight of an old woods road that is no longer used by men. Near the mouth of the den is the stump of a tree, and close around the roots of the stump is a circular path, a path trampled in the earth by the running of little feet. Touching this path on the north side of the stump is a larger ring, about four feet across, worn in the dead leaves by the same little feet. Touching the path on the south or opposite side is another ring. Around these rings the cubs play a nameless game of some kind, a game that is hard for us to follow, because we have nothing like it.

While the merry little fellows play silently, hour after hour, the old mother fox, or the vixen, as hunters call her, is stretched out on a flat rock above them, keeping watch. Her eyes look sleepy, but her ears and nose are wide awake, never fear. Suddenly a dog barks, breaking the silence that is like music, and the vixen's eyes snap abruptly open. A short while ago the bark sounded faintly, at a great distance; now it is nearer; it is coming and the vixen lifts her head to point her ears at the cubs. She makes no outcry, no sound of any kind that your ears can hear; but at this gesture the cubs quit their play and slip like shadows into the den.

As the last little tail goes underground, the vixen leaps far out from her rock and makes a swift circle of tracks, entirely around the den and playground. Any dog, smelling these fresh tracks first, will naturally follow them and so learn nothing of the cubs. If he comes too near, the vixen will show herself in plain sight, and yap-yap at him until he chases her. So she lures him off to the great ledge, where she squeezes into a tiny den under the rocks. If the dog is small and foolish enough to

follow her, he gets his nose nipped by sharp teeth; and a big dog gets only sore feet by trying to scratch away a mountain with his toe nails.

Once you have seen the play ended for any reason, go away quietly, and be content with what you have seen. You may come back another day, and renew your watching, so long as you keep at a distance. But you should never examine the den closely or leave the scent of your feet on the playground more than once; otherwise the vixen will know that you have found her den. Then she may take her cubs away to a safer place, carrying them one by one in her mouth, as a cat carries her kittens.





The Busiest Insect of All

A mother mosquito lays her eggs in gutters full of muddy water, old pails or tubs which have been left out in the rain, an old shoe or a dish filled with water, a hollow tree stump, or on a pond. She lays as many as three hundred eggs, stuck together in a tiny raft. The eggs lie quietly on the surface until they are hatched. The sun shines brightly on the little floating raft and in a few hours the baby mosquitoes hatch out.

The babies do not look a bit like their mother. They are little dark wigglers with forked tails. They breathe through a tube in one of the forks instead of in their heads.

On their tails are six swimming hairs and there are others on their bodies. They row with these hairs just as you swim by kicking your legs and throwing out your arms. They have a pair of fine brushes on their heads which they use like brooms to sweep tiny bits of food which float in the water into their mouths.

The baby mosquitoes grow fat as they eat more and more. When they become too large for their old skins, they wriggle out of them and wear a new one, a size larger. When they have done this three times, they look quite different. Their heads are big and round with two breathing tubes like small horns out in front. They have no mouths, so they can not eat, but they spend their time swimming and jumping around in the water. At this stage they are called tumblers or jumpers, because they are such busy little fellows.

All this time their skins keep getting tighter and tighter until finally they crack along the back. Then out come the full-grown mosquitoes and begin making trouble!

All of us dislike mosquitoes because they are great pests. The father mosquito has

feathery feelers and is not able to bite, therefore he can do no harm. The mother mosquito is the disagreeable one. When you hear one buzzing around your head, you can be almost sure it is the mother mosquito. If the father mosquito sings, the "song" is higher than that of the mother mosquito and very faint. Different kinds of mosquitoes have different songs. The feathery feelers of the father mosquito serve as ears so that he is able to tell the song of his mate from other songs.

The mother mosquito has a stinger made of six fine little needles and a slender tube through which she sucks the blood. She uses this stinger to pierce the flesh. What we call a "mosquito bite" is not really a bite at all, but a puncture made by the sharp little stinger. The pain and swelling are caused by the poison which the mosquito uses to make the blood thinner and easier to draw into the tube. If we let her finish her meal, she usually sucks most of the poison back out again and then the sting does not swell so much.

In cold regions mosquitoes lay their eggs on the ground. The eggs lie there, dried or frozen, until the snow melts and forms

pools of water in which they can hatch. Mosquitoes are such hardy insects that they live and thrive even in Alaska. In that country thick clouds of them sometimes attack travelers. There are so many of them in the air that when the men breathe, mosquitoes are drawn into the nostrils and mouth. They sting every part of the body which they can reach. Sometimes men have been driven insane by swarms of these stinging insects.

II. Disease Carriers

The mosquitoes found in the United States rarely carry a disease. These dangerous ones are found in tropical countries. There are two kinds of mosquitoes which carry within their bodies the germs which have killed millions of people. They have made it impossible for white people to live in some tropical countries. Pools of water, puddles of mud, and rivers of stale water have been the homes of millions of these pests and have caused whole races of people to die with malaria and yellow fever.

For years no one knew what caused these

terrible diseases. Clothing and baggage were disinfected or destroyed in the hope of killing the germs. Thousands of tons of goods from tropical countries were thrown from ships because men believed the germs were contained in them. Ships laden with the sick and dying were turned away from docks because everyone feared the germs would be brought to land. People also believed that malaria was caused by a certain mixture of dampness and heat in the air and that it came out of the ground. They thought that anyone breathing this air was sure to get the fever. And all the time the mosquitoes which caused these diseases kept on stinging people and spreading the fever still farther. At last doctors became suspicious of the mosquitoes and tried to prove that they were disease-carriers.

Finally two men decided to find out whether this was true. They built a cottage in the spot which had the most malaria in the entire country. It stood on the banks of a canal which swarmed with mosquito wigglers, but every window and door was covered with a screen fine enough to keep out the thinnest mosquito.

At night the mosquitoes would collect on the screen and buzz hungrily. The men lived there all through the summer and the fall, during the worst malaria season. They left their screened windows open and breathed the air of that region every night, yet they did not get the fever.

Another experiment was made in which some mosquitoes were allowed to suck the blood of a man sick with malaria. These mosquitoes were then shipped to a distant city where malaria fever had never been found. A brave man offered to let the mosquitoes bite him, and sure enough, he was taken ill with the fever. In such ways many doctors made experiments and all proved that this certain kind of mosquito carried within its body the germs of malaria fever.

In another part of the country, yellow fever was very common. Healthy people fled from it and no one would touch anything that belonged to a person sick with it. Someone in this country noticed that mosquitoes and yellow fever seemed to come at the same time. When the mosquitoes were gone, there seemed to be no more cases of fever. Doctors became so sure

of this that they tried an experiment something like the one used to find out about malaria fever.

A small house, also well screened, was built in the fever area. Seven men took turns staying there for twenty days at a time. They had shipped to them the clothing and bedding which yellow fever victims had used while sick. They wore the clothing which they had worn and slept in the bedding and night clothes which they had used. Yet not one of them got the fever. They had proved that the disease could not be caught by using the things a sick person had used.

Then they again had mosquitoes laden with yellow fever germs sting certain healthy men. These men were all taken sick with yellow fever, and one died. After these experiments everyone was certain that the mosquito was the cause of these dreadful diseases, and at once the start was made to get rid of them.

There are several ways in which men can fight against mosquitoes. Places where they breed can often be destroyed; swamps can be drained; holes where water collects can be filled in; old cans, dishes, and

shoes buried. Wells, cisterns, and rain-barrels can be kept covered.

Oil poured on the surface of lakes, ponds, or water holes where mosquitoes breed helps in two ways. It not only keeps the eggs from being laid, but kills any wigglers already hatched because they are not able to get air when they come to the surface to breathe.

Fortunately for us, mosquitoes have many enemies who help us in getting rid of them. Dragon flies like nothing better than a meal of mosquitoes. They have such a reputation for pouncing on them and catching them that they are often called "mosquito hawks." Toads, frogs, and turtles eat them. Different kinds of fish and minnows eat many of their eggs. Birds and bats are fond of mosquitoes for lunches between meals. A purple martin may eat 2000 mosquitoes in a day.

Because so much has been done already to kill mosquitoes, the cases of sickness which they cause have become fewer and fewer, and in some places, there are none.





The Whirlybird

I wasn't very big when I first opened my eyes. In fact, I was so tiny and weak that about all I could do was to stretch my neck and look up into the leaves about me. It wasn't much for scenery — just the leaves and the little patches of the blue summer sky that showed here and there.

I was alone in my nest, except for the pure white egg from which my sister would hatch three days later. Perhaps you'd think there was plenty of room for me to move around, for the egg was only the size of a navy bean. But don't forget that my nest wasn't very big — just smaller than half a walnut shell.

By the time my mother came with some food, I was feeling hungry. My mother was pleased to see me jerking my head about so eagerly. She had a small fly for me which she had stolen from a spider's web.

Had you been peeping, you probably would have thought my first meal was a frightening experience. Mother poked her long, spear-like beak way down my thin throat.

Then with a whirl she was away and I knew she had gone to hunt for more food.

Each day I grew stronger. Soon my head didn't flop around as it had at first. I hate to say it, but I guess I wasn't very beautiful as a baby. There wasn't a single feather on me. I was naked and ugly.

When I was three days old my sister struggled out of her shell. Maybe you think she was slow or late, but she was right on time. Hummingbird eggs are laid two or three days apart, and they hatch that way, too.

Now Mother was busier than ever. There were two of us to feed. We grew fast the first week. It was good hummingbird weather. The sun shone every day and food was easy to find. But the second week was different. It was cold and damp and rainy. Our nest was bleak and chilly. We didn't grow much that week.

When I was ten — ten days, that is — little feathers like pinpoints were sticking out of me all over, even out of my head. What a sight! I looked like a baby porcupine. I wouldn't have stirred away from my nest, even if I could have, for fear someone would see me and laugh.

At three weeks I wasn't so ugly anymore. Now I was full-grown and ready to leave the nest. My mother didn't say anything to me about it, so don't ask me how I knew when the right time came. I can't explain it, but one morning I woke up and knew this was the morning. I just got up, stood on the edge of the nest, and flew away — straight up into the air like a helicopter.

There was a funny feeling inside me, as I whirled away from that little nest high in the tree. It was the only home I had ever known, but I would never come back to it again. I was completely on my own now. I knew it without asking. It was a big step. Up to now all my food had been found for me and delivered right into my throat. Now I would have to find my own meals.

I practiced flying all the different ways I could — forward and backward, straight up and down. I found I could even fly a little sideways.

I said I was full-grown, but I never told you how big that is. Or maybe I should say how little. Because full-grown isn't very big for a hummingbird. I was less than four inches long from the tip of my beak to the end of my tail. And my weight was

less than that of a penny.

While I was practicing my flying, a mosquito buzzed past me. I thought, "How good that would taste!" I chased it awhile, but couldn't catch it.

Something bright red was flashing in the air close to some tall buildings. I went right over to see, but it wasn't anything to eat. Just some wash the woman of the house had hung out to dry. Handkerchiefs, I think they were.

I spotted some little yellow circles on the green grass. I went over to see what they were, but I didn't land on the ground beside them. Somehow I knew without trying that I couldn't walk a single step. But it wasn't anything to feel badly about or be ashamed of. Neither could my mother or my father.

Hovering above the yellow circles, I poked my beak into a couple of them. Not as sweet as they looked, I decided. Since then, I don't bother much with dandelions.

In the garden I found some blue circles with a much sweeter taste. I also found a nest of tiny bugs under the curled-over tip of a leaf. The bugs were so tiny that you could not have seen them at all, but to me

they were a worthwhile discovery.

By now I was beginning to feel livelier and more sure of myself. Close to the building where the wash was hung, I found a strange thing. It was a long slender glass tube with a bright yellow ribbon tied around it. I stuck my beak into the top of the tube. It was full of something sweet. I whirled away, all excited, and then came back for another sip. The second time at the tube, some boys and girls came running. "Look, there is a hummingbird drinking out of the glass tube we put up. I wonder if there is still enough sugar water in it. Let's run and tell Mother to come and look, too."

I went ahead, enjoying my sugary feast, paying no attention to the boys and girls. But then I heard something that made me whirl even more excitedly. It was a girl squealing, "Oh, look, Mother. Isn't that hummingbird just beautiful! I never saw such a pretty bird."

I looked at myself in surprise. You know, what the girl had said was true. My feathers were now bright green and my throat a brilliant patch of ruby red.

The Beetree

April turned to May, and the sweet smell of lilacs told the Weber children that winter was far behind and summer on its way. Lilies of the valley tinkled their tiny white bells in the gentle afternoon breezes. Bees, eager to refill their winter storehouses, began to visit the spring flowers.

Grandfather Weber remembered his promise to Grandmother. He must find a bee tree, so that she could have a fresh supply of honey. It was a Saturday morning when the old man decided to hunt through the woods for a bee tree. With an ax in one hand and a pail in the other, he was just coming out of the woodshed when into the lane drove two of his grandchildren in their pony cart.

"Where are you going, Grandpa?" greeted Merlin, bringing the pony to a halt near the shed.

"Got to fetch some honey for Grandma. The crock in the pantry is nearly empty." He looked at the children's eager faces. "You two wouldn't want to come along and

help, I suppose?"

"May we, Grandpa, really?" asked Edna, her face all aglow.

"Tie up your pony, and one of you carry this pail." He swung the light metal container back and forth. "And follow me."

Out of the cart sprang the two children. Merlin tied the pony to a ring at the corner of the shed. Edna took the pail from Grandfather, who had playfully hidden it behind his legs.

Down the cow lane marched the happy threesome. Grandfather was glad for the company. He wondered why he didn't take the children on outings like this more often — especially in the spring. They came to a fence. Grandfather lifted Edna over it, but Merlin scrambled over the fence. They were crossing the pasture when suddenly something shot up into the air next to Edna. There was a whirring sound and a flapping of wings.

"E-eeee-yow!" screamed the girl, and she jumped several inches off the ground.

"Ha, ha," laughed Merlin. "It won't bite you."

"It was only a pheasant," smiled Grand-

father. "They always hide in the clumps of weeds until you are about to step on them. Then they shoot straight up like a jet."

Edna watched the large bird fly off ahead of them. A weird cry rang out loud and clear. Soon the bird glided to the ground a safe distance ahead of them. Even though the pheasant had frightened her, Edna thought it was beautiful with its red and green head and white ring around its neck.

"Grandpa," asked Merlin, as they neared the end of the pasture. "Why do you still hunt for honey? The man across the road from us has wooden hives right in his orchard."

Grandfather smiled the way he always did when he thought of how things had changed since he was young. "Well, Merlin, you'll learn as you grow older that people will find easier ways of doing things. Yet you will still like the old way. I guess I'm just a little old-fashioned."

"We're glad you are that way," said Merlin, matching his step with Grandpa's. "Because if you weren't, we wouldn't be going along with you today."

The pasture ended and the woods began.

It was cool and shady. The lofty maples and elms grew far apart, but their branches overlapped, keeping out much of the sunlight. Little trees, some of them shorter than a yardstick, dotted the forest floor. Except for these young trees, the woods was fairly clear of underbrush.

The first thing Grandfather did was to find a flat stump. Taking the pail from Edna, he pried open the lid. Inside was about half a glass of thick liquid. He poured some of it on the stump.

"What's that?" asked Edna.

"Sugar water," answered Grandpa. "Bees like something sweet."

"Do we wait here until they come?" asked Merlin.

Grandfather explained the plan to the children. "You will both watch this stump. Stand behind this tree." He slapped a good-sized elm. "When you see a bee land on the stump, watch carefully. In a few seconds the bee will leave and return to the tree where it lives. Follow it until you lose sight of it. Then stop and stay right where you are. Another bee will come along that same way. Bees always fly a



straight line to their tree."

"They make a beeline for it," broke in Merlin.

"Yep, they make a beeline for their home," agreed Grandfather. "Now I'll go to the opposite side of the woods, pour some sugar water on a stump and watch for bees, too. You follow yours and I'll follow mine. We should meet somewhere near a bee tree. Okay?"

"Yes," chorused the children.

"This is going to be fun," said Edna, watching Grandfather grow smaller and smaller as he walked through the woods.

"Yes, but we have to be on our guard, too," advised her brother. "We want to follow the bees and not wander about."

The Weber children stood close to the large elm tree Grandpa had picked out for them. Only a few minutes passed when Edna became frightened. "What if we get lost and Grandpa can't find us," she wor-

ried. "And maybe there are bears in here." Her face wasn't as cheerful as it had been.

"Silly," chided Merlin, "this woods isn't big enough to get lost in. And who ever heard of bears around here?"

"But how — ?"

"Sssshh," warned Merlin, "there is a bee landing on the stump."

At first the bee buzzed above the stump, then landed on the sugar water. Seconds later it rose into the air, circled about as if not sure which way to go, and then flew off.

"It's going that way," pointed Merlin towards the center of the forest. "Come on, after it!"

The children hurried after the little speck in the air. They hopped fallen branches and avoided the wet places. It was not long, though, until they had lost sight of the bee. "Okay, let's wait here," said Merlin. "Remember what Grandpa said; bees always follow the same path to their home."

The words were barely spoken when Edna gave Merlin's shirt sleeve a yank. "There goes another. I heard it buzzing right past my head."

The chase continued. Three more times they lost sight of their guide, but another bee was always just minutes behind. The children were waiting for a bee when they heard a crunching sound ahead of them. "Maybe it's a bear," whimpered Edna, her face turning very white. But around a clump of trees came Grandfather. He was still carrying the ax and the pail.

"So," he said, his face all smiles, "we were led to the same spot. Good. The bee tree should be close by."

"What does a bee tree look like?" asked Edna, stretching her neck and peering up at a slender maple.

"I know," answered Merlin. "They are dead and hollow."

"That's right," agreed Grandfather. "The tree must be hollow so the bees will have a place to store their honey."

The search for the bee tree began. Grandfather took his ax and lightly thumped different tree trunks. "Here it is," he called to the children, who were a short distance away. He thumped the side of the tree with the dull, heavy side of the ax. "Hear the hollow sound?" Then he tapped another tree. The ax bounced off and there

was a solid sound. "Hear the difference?"

"But where do the bees go in?" asked Edna. "Here at the bottom?" She pointed at a section of decayed trunk.

Before Grandfather could answer, Merlin was pointing further up the tree and exclaiming, "Up there. Up there. The bees are going into a hole up there."

All three watched some bees go in and out the small hole.

"How will we get the honey out from up there?" Edna wondered.

Grandfather set the pail next to the tree and rubbed his hands along the smooth ax handle. "I'll chop the tree down. Then I will split it open wide enough to scoop out the honey."

"Won't the bees sting us?" Edna worried.

"Not if we smoke them." The old man bent over and gathered up handfuls of dry leaves and stuffed them into the decayed opening at the base of the tree. Taking a match from his pocket, he struck it on the ax handle. Soon the leaves were burning and sending thick smoke up the hollow tree trunk.

"CHOP, CHOP, CHOP!" sounded Grandfather's ax on the hollow trunk. "CRASH!"

The tree fell to the ground, snapping off dead branches as it struck other trees. Grandfather chopped the entrance to the bees' storehouse wide open. A swarm of bees buzzed around him. Edna and Merlin backed away. But Grandfather told them, "You don't have to worry about the bees stinging you. The smoke has dulled them. We'll have time to scoop the honey out before they have their full strength back."

"How pretty," admired Edna, standing bravely at Grandfather's side now. "The honey looks like gold. But what is the dark stuff underneath it?"

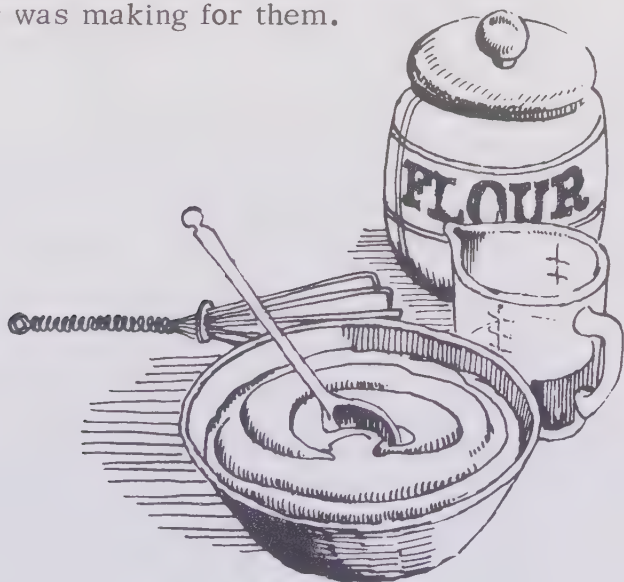
"Old honey," answered Grandfather. "It has turned brown with age. It's left over from the years when the bees had stored too much honey. But each year they gather a new supply anyway."

Reaching into his coat pocket, the old man pulled out a large mixing spoon. He began to scoop the rich, sweet honey into the pail. When the thick honey was even with the lip of the pail, Grandfather declared that they had enough.

"Won't Grandma be surprised!" said Merlin as the three honey gatherers headed home.

"Oh," grinned Grandfather Weber, "if I know Grandma, she'll be depending on our honey. Before I left the house this morning she said she was planning something — something good that is made with honey."

"What is Grandma planning?" wondered the children, as they crossed the pasture and headed down the cow lane. They didn't have long to wait for an answer. When they reached the house and entered the warm kitchen, a familiar smell met their noses. They were just in time to pour some of their golden honey on the pancakes Grandmother was making for them.



This is My Father's World

This is my Father's world,
And to my listening ears
All nature sings, and round me rings
The music of the spheres.

This is my Father's world;
I rest me in the thought
Of rocks, and trees, of skies, and seas,
His hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Father's world;
The birds that carols raise;
The morning light, the lily white,
Declare their Maker's praise.

This is my Father's world;
He shines in all that's fair;
In the rustling grass I hear Him pass,
He speaks to me everywhere.

- M. Babcock

Karen, the Kangaroo

At the southeastern corner of the globe is Australia. It is the smallest continent, but the sixth largest country in the world. The fact that it is both a continent and a single country makes it one of the most unusual areas of the world. But it is unusual for another reason; it has various animals which are found nowhere else in the world. Perhaps the most interesting and famous of these is the kangaroo.

Most people in the world did not know such a creature existed until 137 years after Columbus discovered America. In 1629 a Dutch ship was blown off its course by a storm and wrecked on the coast of Australia. The captain and his men swam ashore. They were surprised to see large animals hopping about. They had no idea where they were. By accident they had visited the only area in the world where such animals exist.

We can imagine the sailors rubbed their eyes to see if they were dreaming, or if the animals were real. Perhaps for a brief second they even imagined they had landed

on a "fairy tale" island, full of mystery. The captain wrote an entry in his ship's journal about the "queer animals" he and his men had seen.

Today nearly everyone knows what a kangaroo looks like and that they aren't fairy tale creatures at all, but real, live animals that live in that part of the world. Even so, they are unusual and interesting, and Karen, a full-grown kangaroo, is no exception.

When we take our first glimpse of Karen, we might say that she looks like a deer. Her small, slender head with large ears sticking straight up does look like a deer's head. But as we study her short front legs and see that she has paws instead of hoofs, we know that she is different from a deer. Then gazing at her large hind legs and long feet, we might think she looks like a giant jack rabbit. But when we notice her very long, thick tail which doesn't look like anything we've seen before, we decide she is an animal that is different from all other animals. And then we are right — Karen is a kangaroo, an animal that can hop like a rabbit with the speed of a deer.



There are more than fifty types of kangaroos found in Australia and the islands along its coast. The rat kangaroo is the smallest, measuring barely twelve inches from its nose to the tip of its tail. Karen, though, is a member of the largest kind of kangaroos — called the great gray kangaroo.

Father kangaroos of Karen's type may weigh as much as 200 pounds and stand seven feet tall. Karen, now a full-grown

female, is not quite as heavy or tall. Because she is a full-grown female, Australians call her a doe. When she has a baby, whether it is a male or a female, it will be called a joey. Karen's younger sister, who isn't full-grown yet, is called a flyer. Father kangaroos are called old boomers. The herd with which Karen travels is called a mob.

Karen spends most of her time grazing with the mob across the plains of tall grass. She nibbles at the new, short grass, which is more tender. Grass is the only food she eats. During the hot afternoon hours she rests. Her brownish-gray fur nearly matches the brownish grass in which she lies. The shade of a nearby grove of trees keeps her cool. As she rests she sniffs the air now and then for any strange scents and flicks her ears to catch any unfamiliar sounds. She is alert to danger.

Really, there are no animals in Australia which she fears. There are no lions, tigers, leopards — no animals that want to kill her for meat. The wild dogs could kill her if they ganged up on her when she was by herself, but Karen travels with the mob

and does not fear them. It isn't animals that she fears, but man. Hunters are her greatest danger.

Actually, it is not the man himself that Karen fears, but his jeep that can outrun her and his gun which can outfight her. If a man without these should attack her, she would have no fear of him. Like all kangaroos, Karen is timid by nature. She does not pick fights with animals or men. But if she is trapped, she can put up a deadly fight.

A man with a gun can, of course, kill her from a distance. But if he were to corner her and attempt to kill her with a knife, he would find her much more dangerous than she looks. Karen would stand up straight and poke at him with her short front legs, acting as if she were going to punch him like a boxer. Having caught the man's attention, she would suddenly thrust herself back on her tail and strike forward with both her long, powerful hind legs. Not only would the man have his wind knocked out of him, but also be seriously if not fatally clawed.

Karen's hind feet have four claws. The one on the middle toe is like a dagger,

much thicker and longer than the others. A ripping blow from it is often fatal. Karen may not look as dangerous as a tiger, but her kick is as deadly as a tiger's pounce.

One day as the mob is grazing, an old boomer's alert ears pick up the whine of an approaching jeep's motor. He raises no warning call with his voice, for the only sound a kangaroo can make is a rough, coughing sound. Instead, he thumps the ground with one of his large hind feet. Instantly the kangaroos beside him lift their heads. Karen is grazing toward the center of the mob. The mob begins to run in all directions, splitting into smaller groups. Karen chooses a direction and runs, too, not knowing what it is that has frightened the others, but knowing that danger is approaching.

Karen's powerful hind legs spring forward, her speed increasing with each hop. Her leaps are 25 feet apart and she reaches 25 miles an hour. She knows that she can run ten miles an hour faster, if she gets into a tight spot, but that would soon wear her out. As she hops faster, her tail is carried higher; it does not push her along but it helps her to keep her balance.

After several minutes the kangaroos with whom Karen has fled slacken their speed and finally stop running. They return to grazing as if nothing had happened. Soon other kangaroos come to join them and the mob is together again.

Actually, had the mob known it, they would not have needed to run. The jeep contained only tourists who wanted to see the kangaroos and take their picture. But the kangaroos had no way of knowing that the jeep didn't contain hunters who would shoot them for their meat and sell their hide for leather.

Several months later Karen is resting in the tall grass and gives birth to her first joey, or baby kangaroo. It is amazingly tiny, considering the size of Karen. Joey is barely an inch long — about the size of a cricket. He is pinkish, has no hair, and is blind. Yet his front legs are formed well enough so that he can pull himself through his mother's fur to her pouch, about a foot beneath her front legs. Karen does not lift tiny Joey into the pouch, but licks a path through her fur for him to follow. The pouch is very roomy and Joey finds warmth there, and a nipple from which to nurse.

Joey was tiny at birth, but feeding on his mother's milk makes him grow fast. In a few months he is large enough to peek out of Karen's pouch as she grazes. He enjoys his traveling home, for wherever his mother goes, he goes along without any effort.

But when Joey is four months old, he decides he'd like to climb out of the pouch and sample what Karen is eating. So pushing with his long hind legs and pulling with his short front ones, he leaves the pouch. But everything outside is so new and strange that at the first odd noise, he leaps head-first into the safety of Karen's pouch. Soon he peers out and then climbs out again. Several times he becomes frightened and dives into his mother's pouch, but soon he is no longer so fearful and nibbles the grass at his feet. He likes its taste and eats some more.

At eight months, Joey weighs fifteen pounds and the pouch is now a tight fit. Besides, he is heavy for Karen to carry. So one afternoon when Joey has been grazing and wants to climb back into the pouch, Karen slaps him with her front paw. Startled, Joey eyes his mother and then attempts to climb into the pouch again. Once

more Karen slaps him. This continues until Joey realizes that the pouch is no longer his home. He is no longer a pouch baby, but part of the mob.

Even though Joey no longer lives in his mother's pouch, he is not full-grown. He has enemies who would like to have him for a meal. One of them is the wild dog. A pack of them might gang up on the mob, hoping to catch one or two of the joeys. So Karen keeps a good eye on Joey and tries to protect him when danger is near. She knows that a certain kind of large snake could harm him, and that a big Australian eagle could swoop down and carry Joey off to its nest for a meal for its young.

A year passes and Joey grows. Karen does not need to protect him from the snakes or the eagle now, for he is too big for them to capture. But the wild dogs are still a threat. Also, Karen now has a new-born joey in her pouch that will soon come out and need her protection.

There is something else on Karen's mind and on the minds of the other kangaroos. The summer has been very dry and the grass is not plentiful. They need to look for a better grazing place. They travel a

few miles into a new area and find the grass some thicker. They also discover they are not alone on it. Grazing beside them are thousands of sheep. Without knowing it, the mob has entered a sheep ranch.

The sheep, being peaceful by nature, do not mind sharing their range with the kangaroos. But the owners of the ranch do mind it. When a shepherd sees the mob he reports it at once to the ranchers. Immediately they make plans to destroy the kangaroos.

The sheep ranchers in Australia consider the kangaroos a pest, for they take valuable pasture land and crowd out the sheep. The kangaroo eats the grass down too short and also leaves a bad taste on it. The sheep refuse to graze where kangaroos have eaten.

Sheep raising in Australia is big business. Each year 750 million dollars worth of wool is shipped to other countries. The sheep ranchers consider the kangaroo a threat to their business, the same way an American considers rats. They are pests that need to be destroyed.

Rifle shots ring out. The sheep huddle

together, but the kangaroos scatter. The ranchers are on horseback and can keep up with their hopping enemies. About half of the mob falls dead. Karen and Joey escape. The mob that is left over gathers again, but there are only about half as many as there had been. Each year more and more kangaroos are killed to make room for sheep ranches. Each year it becomes harder for kangaroos like Karen to find enough grass to stay alive. Australia is no longer a place where kangaroos can hop about freely and graze at will.

Little Men of the Woods

When we see huge irrigation dams, we are a little awed by their size. We think that the men who planned and built them must have been smart men with a great deal of skill. Water to irrigate farms and orchards, water power to make electricity, a storage place that helps prevent floods, lakes for boating — an irrigation dam provides all these.

Men have been building dams for a long time, but not nearly as long as the industrious beavers. Long before man thought of storing up water or changing the course of a river, beavers were busily building dams across streams and meadows. Sometimes a whole colony will work together at building. But this time, perhaps, a couple of young beavers will set up housekeeping and build a new dam of their own.

The "little men of the woods" is the name the Indians gave the beavers, and the skill and industry with which this pair sets to work would do credit to any young couple building a new home. The site must be just right. The two beavers swim down the stream until they find a spot to their liking.

There must be plenty of water, for part of their food grows under water, and water must surround their house. There must be plenty of trees of the right kind, too, to provide material for the dam.

As soon as they find a suitable place, the two set to work. Each beaver is about three feet long, and weighs from thirty to fifty pounds. The beavers' equipment includes webbed hind feet for swimming,



sharp chisel-shaped teeth for gnawing, and hand-like front paws for placing logs, sticks, and mud on the dam.

The pair can accomplish a surprising amount of work in a day. Balancing on a broad flat tail while he works, the young beaver can cut a five-inch willow trunk through in three minutes.

"Crash!" Down goes the tree. Now the two beavers cut off the branches and drag them to their storage pile, for the tender bark is their favorite food. Then they cut the tree into logs and drag these to the place where the dam is to be built.

To the growing dam of logs, the beavers add large branches and sticks. Then they bring in gravel and water plants to fill the larger openings. Their work is helped now by the stream itself, as the driftwood and weeds it carries downstream are caught against the logs of the dam. Last of all, the beavers bring mud in their front paws and cover the dam with a plaster of mud until every hole is filled.

Now the water begins to rise, flooding the ground above the dam on either side of the stream. But it doesn't rise too high; the beavers make a spillway at one end of the dam to drain off the extra water when the dam has reached the proper height.

Building the home comes next. The lodge may be located either on an island above the dam or in the water near the bank. The beavers build a dome-shaped house of logs, several feet high. The entrance is out of sight, under the water.

The beavers swim in and out. But inside, the room is warm and dry, the dirt floor covered with leaves and twigs. In May or June, when the two to six babies are born, the snug home is ready for them.

The dam serves the beavers in many ways. The water protects their home from enemies and keeps the willows and alder trees, whose bark they love to eat, growing along the banks. Before winter comes the beavers stock their underwater storehouse with logs, pushing the ends far down into the mud. Then, when the surface of the dam is frozen solid and the north wind blows the snow into drifts overhead, the beavers have a fine food supply, safe from enemies, frost, and snow.

Of the beavers' enemies down through the centuries, man has been the most deadly. About a hundred years ago beavers were trapped for their fur, which was in great demand for making men's beaver hats. Then, too, beaver dams often flooded farm lands and railroad sites, and the first thought was to kill the beavers.

But little by little people have come to see that the beavers are very useful animals. Beaver dams in upper tributaries

of the rivers and streams helped prevent floods in the springtime and caught much of the good soil that would otherwise wash away to the ocean. Wildlife and forest service men thought of a better way to control the beavers than to shoot them.

Now beavers who decide to build their dams where they will flood roads or farms are caught in box traps. When both of a pair have been caught, they are put into a wooden cage and given an airplane ride up into the mountains. A parachute is fastened to the cage and the beavers are dropped near the headwaters of a mountain stream. As the cage drops to the ground, the door of the cage opens, allowing the beavers to go free. They are now in an area where a dam will benefit both themselves and their neighbors.

Other animals, too, enjoy the pond above the beaver dam. Moose feed there. Deer and elk find their pasture better with the beaver dam to help keep it fresh and green. In dry years fish that find their streams becoming low swim to the deeper waters of the beaver dam. Migrating ducks and geese stop for food and rest. It does not take these creatures long to find the cool,

quiet pool. Now man, too, has come to appreciate and protect these smart, industrious "little men of the woods."



Little by Little

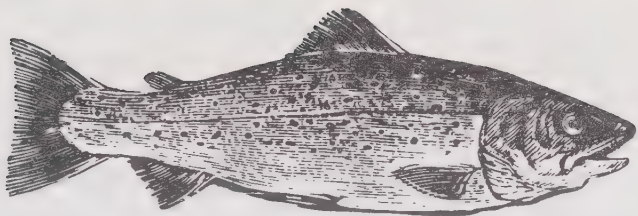
"Little by little," an acorn said,
As it slowly sank in its mossy bed;
"I am improving day by day,
Hidden deep in the earth away."
Little by little each day it grew;
Little by little it sipped the dew;
Downward it sent out a thread-like root;
Up in the air sprung a tiny shoot.
Day after day, and year after year,
Little by little the leaves appear;

And the slender branches spread far and wide,
Till the mighty oak is the forest's pride.

Far down in the depths of the dark blue sea
An insect train worked ceaselessly;
Grain by grain, they are building well,
Each one alone in its little cell;
Moment by moment, and day by day,
Never stopping to rest or play.
Rocks upon rocks they are rearing high,
Till the top looks out on the sunny sky;
The gentle wind and the balmy air
Little by little bring verdure there;
Till the summer sunbeams gaily smile
On the buds and flowers of the coral isle.

"Little by little," said a thoughtful boy,
"Moment by moment I'll well employ,
Learning a little every day,
And not spending all my time in play;
And still this rule in my mind shall dwell,
'Whatever I do, I will do it well.'
Little by little I'll learn to know
The treasured wisdom of long ago;
And one of these days perhaps we'll see
That the world will be the better for me."
And do you not think that this simple plan
Made him a wise and useful man?

- Jones' Reader, 1903



Dotty, a Pacific Salmon

It is in a cool, clear stream in Oregon where Dotty first swims about. For over two months she had lain on the shallow stream bottom — a slowly developing salmon egg. Now it is early January and she is able to swim some. What a queer-looking fish she is! She does not have the graceful, slender shape of her parents, but is short and very thick around her middle. She is only an inch long and on her stomach she carries a bulge called a "yolk sac." From this she will eat for the next two months, not using her mouth but absorbing the "yolk sac" into her body.

Dotty realizes she is no longer merely an egg. She feels that she can swim and move about, even if her bulging stomach

makes her swim awkwardly. She is not alone in the stream, but is part of a "school" of tiny salmon like herself. Dotty and the others are just learning to swim when a large fish swims rapidly toward them. Something tells the little salmon to scatter. Dotty is near a rock on the stream bottom and darts under it. It is a good thing that she does, for she avoids becoming part of a large fish's breakfast. The fish catches the salmon which have not reached a hiding place and swallows them. This is Dotty's first lesson that the stream contains danger.

For two months Dotty remains hidden under the flat rock, enjoying its safe shelter and absorbing her "yolk sac." But one day the "yolk sac" is empty and she must leave her hiding place to search for food. She does not, however, venture far away from the flat rock. She goes just far enough to find small insects and plants to eat. Then she hurries back to her hiding place. In about three more months she gets an urge to leave the rock and swim downstream. By now she is five inches long and covered with silvery scales. As she swims she notices that many other salmon her size

are also swimming in the same direction. Dotty does not realize it, but the journey is going to be a long one. It will take her several hundred miles to the Pacific Ocean. Neither she nor the other salmon have decided to go; it is something which they must do. This urge to go is called "instinct" and was given to them by their creator, God, many, many years ago.

Dotty is a fine looking salmon now, quite sleek and shaped much like her parents, only much smaller. She is large enough, though, to eat fish smaller than herself, and that is what she lives on as she travels with the stream's current to the ocean. She soon learns to spot the colorful flash of an approaching trout and to dart out of its hungry path. But one day as she is hungrily chasing a small fish, Dotty is startled by a motion in the water beside her. With a rapid glance she sees no large fish chasing her, but what looks like a stick in the water. Suddenly the stick-like object disappears. Frightened, Dotty darts for shelter in the weeds and dark places among the stream's edge. What she does not realize is that the stick-like object was the beak of a large bird standing in the water, fishing.

It had nearly speared Dotty for its supper, and her trip to the ocean would have been over.

Neither Dotty nor the other salmon are in a hurry to leave the stream. It takes them several months to reach the Pacific Ocean. When they arrive they notice that the water is very salty. The water in the stream was clear and fresh, but they have no trouble adjusting to the new water. They notice, too, that there are other types of salmon which have come from streams along the coastline from northern California to northern Alaska. Dotty and the other salmon from her stream are Chinook salmon, but there are four other kinds in the Pacific Ocean.

Not only does Dotty find the ocean larger than her home stream, she also finds the fish that try and capture her much larger. She is horrified when a shark gobbles down a half dozen of her companions at a time and then returns for more! The "school" of salmon is very large and Dotty escapes being caught by the shark. However, it teaches her to fear the sharp teeth of her largest enemy.

As the months pass, Dotty grows. She now weighs ten pounds and is shaped very much like her parents had been. Her color is smokey and the black dots common to Chinook salmon are clearly seen on her back. Each day for her is an eventful one and seldom does a day go by that she does not see some of her "school" eaten by a larger fish.

One day a new enemy enters the "school." Its shape makes Dotty think of the water snakes which had harmlessly swum in her home stream. What she does not realize is that this snake-like creature is not a harmless snake at all. It is the dangerous lamprey which does not eat the salmon, but fastens its round mouth to a salmon and sucks the blood out over a period of days until the fish is dead. Dotty is not bothered by the lampreys, but many other salmon soon have lampreys hanging from their sides.

After several years of ocean life, Dotty has another strong urge. This time it tells her to return to the stream where she was born. Once again there is no choice in the matter. The instinct which had forced her to leave the stream now tells her to return.

As Dotty swims the many miles through the ocean to the opening of her stream, she is not alone. Her entire "school" has felt the same urge. Their number is quite a bit smaller than when they left the stream two years before, because many of them were not so lucky to avoid the many dangers of the ocean — the sharks, lampreys, seals, sea lions, sea bass, and diving birds.

The trip upstream is much harder for Dotty and the other salmon than the trip downstream had been. Now there is no current to carry them along; they have to swim against the current.

The salmon do not eat as they swim upstream. They were nice and fat, weighing twenty-five or more pounds, when they left the ocean. But each day as they battle the current upstream, they lose weight. Much of their energy is spent when they come to small waterfalls. On the trip downstream they could sail over the edge of these falls without any effort. But now they must leap up over the falls. Some are as high as ten feet.

Dotty, like all salmon, is a good leaper, but sometimes a waterfall is so tall that she must try several times before she is

successful in getting over it. Each time that she misses, she falls back on the rocks below, bruising her tired body. Finally she manages to leap upward ten feet in the air and land safely on top of the water. Then she must quickly swim onward against the strong current, lest it sweep her back down over the waterfalls. Some of the salmon in her "school" are not so fortunate, and they die on the rocks below the waterfalls.

The waterfalls are not the only danger Dotty has to pass. There is another larger danger — fishing nets. No nets had been stretched across the stream on her journey to the sea, so she is not looking for them on her way upstream. The stream is blocked, and she can travel no further. The next morning the net begins to lift her and her "school" upward. Dotty is very frightened and pushes her body against the net, trying to squeeze through the narrow openings. Other salmon do the same thing and one strand of the net tears, letting some of them slip through. Dotty swims toward the opening in the net and escapes just before the net is lifted from the water. The "school" is now very small.

Several months pass before Dotty and the few remaining salmon reach the quiet, shallow pools where they were born. She is no longer the heavy, beautiful salmon she had been when she began her trip home from the ocean. She has not eaten all this time and her sides are thin. They are also bruised and torn. Some of the scales which had black dots on them are missing, replaced with scars. She is a tired and worn-out fish, but she has enough energy to dig a shallow trench in the gravel bottom of the stream and to spawn (or lay) her thousands of eggs in it.

Dotty's work is completed, once she has spawned. The next day she dies, as all salmon do after spawning. The gentle current carries her body tail-first down the stream to be eaten by one of the dangers she had so carefully avoided during her life. Maybe a grizzly bear will dip her out with his giant paw or a hungry heron will spear her with its beak. But it does not matter now. Dotty has lived a full life, and has left behind thousands of eggs — the promise of more salmon to fill the stream.

Unit Four

**GROWING
STRONGER**

The Shepherd Psalm

The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down
 in green pastures:
He restoreth my soul:
He guideth me in the paths
 of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley
 of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
For thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me
In the presence of mine enemies:
Thou hast anointed my head with oil;
My cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
 all the days of my life:
And I will dwell
 in the house of the Lord forever.

-Psalm 23

The Boy Who Had Ten Thumbs

"Get it, Dan!"

The shrill scream went up as one voice from the excited throats of the other players. Lloyd had hit a grounder, and it bounded over the uneven grass between second base and third, slipping through Dan's outstretched hands. After the ball went Dan, grabbing for it as it slowed down. The yelling from his side grew more frantic. Dan grabbed again, missed, then was almost upon it.

He had it! No, his racing foot struck the ball and sent it bouncing another ten feet ahead of him. Frantically, he followed. At last he got a firm grip on it and turned to throw it home. But as he did so, a groan from his side and a yell of triumph from the other side told him that Lloyd had reached home plate.

The game was over. They had lost, and Dan had let the other side score the winning point.

"Butterfingers! Butterfingers!" sounded the mocking cries from his disappointed

classmates. Dan kicked unhappily at a clump of grass. Why was he always the one to fumble the ball? Once — just once, he'd like to do something right.

The game over, the students drifted back toward the classroom. The winning side was noisy and excited, but Dan's team was glum with disappointment. Dan wandered in slowly from left field, wishing he didn't have to face his gloomy classmates.

He tried to keep his mind on his studies that afternoon, but it kept going back to the lost game. To have enough to make two teams, every boy in school was needed. Dan wished it weren't so — that he didn't have to help play. Then he could have stayed on the sidelines and not made a clown of himself, trying to be something he wasn't meant to be.

What was he good at? Nothing, he told himself unhappily. He thought of his two brothers. Lloyd was a year older than Dan, and was an excellent ball player. Tall and muscular, he was a natural leader and well-liked by his classmates. His merry blue eyes and ready smile helped him make friends easily.

Arthur, a year younger than Dan, was

the outstanding student in the family. Quiet, but friendly and well-liked, he was always at the head of the class, and a good singer as well.

And Dan? His studies were a trial. His barely passing grades seemed extra poor when they were compared with Arthur's excellent ones. He was taller than either of his brothers, but he was gangling and seemed all arms and legs. Sometimes Dan felt he was just a big joke to his family and friends. But his good-natured grin hid his feelings so well that those who laughed at him did not guess how much their remarks hurt.

Fifteen minutes before the close of school, Mr. Byler tapped the bell on his desk. Dan looked up to see an amused smile on the teacher's face.

"This really looks like a sad occasion for some of you," said Mr. Byler. "There will be other games, you know. Somebody has to lose. I hate to see you go home looking so unhappy. Doesn't anyone have a riddle to cheer us up?"

The students grinned in spite of themselves. It wasn't long before they were laughing.

"What has eighteen legs and catches flies?" someone asked.

What could it be? They made all kinds of wild guesses, but it took Arthur to come up with the right answer. A baseball team, of course.

While the rest were trying to think of another riddle, the teacher asked Lloyd to go to the basement on an errand for him. After Lloyd had left the room there was a short silence, broken only by soft whispering between David, the red-headed wit of the school and his chums at the back of the room.

"This is another riddle," he announced. "What has ten thumbs and two left hands?"

The boys and girls looked at each other with puzzled frowns. Then the quiet was broken by a voice from the back.

"Dan Stoltzfus."

The room was in an uproar. Dan felt the back of his neck growing red. He tried to laugh with the rest, but in his heart was a throbbing sense of hurt that he could not quite hide. It didn't help to see that Arthur was laughing with the rest. Thankfully, it was time for school to let out, and the teacher dismissed the pupils.

Dan snatched his cap from the hook in the hall and was on his way home across the green field. He could have walked with the others along the road, but he felt more like being alone. Anyway, it wasn't more than a mile across their own fields, for the Stoltzfus farm backed against the school ground. But Dan had not gone more than a few yards when he heard a voice behind him.

"Hey, Dan." It was his brothers, Lloyd and Arthur, who had decided to walk home across the fields, too.

"That was quite a riddle David made up, wasn't it?" Arthur said, grinning as if Dan was supposed to have enjoyed the joke.

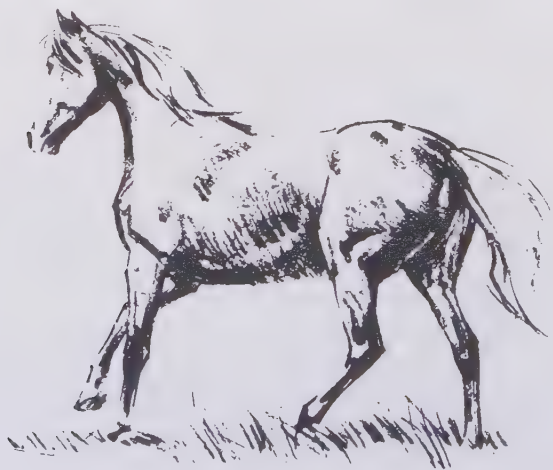
"Yeah, very funny." Dan didn't bother to grin, but Arthur didn't seem to notice.

"What was the riddle?" Lloyd asked, since he had been in the basement and had missed the fun. Then Dan had to listen to the joke a second time. It hurt even more this time, to know that his own brothers found his clumsiness amusing. The talk turned to other things and Dan was glad.

He looked down toward the creek which ran through the farm, where the two big bay work horses were grazing in the new spring

grass. They had two other horses, too — steady little Bess, the brown mare, and her two-year-old colt, Comet.

Comet! Dan's heart lightened as he thought of the black colt. Only yesterday he had curried her, brushing out her coat of long hair which she had grown during the winter. She shone like black satin, and her glossy mane and tail were like flowing silk. When he had opened the barn door she had fairly flown out and across the pasture — head up, mane and tail flying, neat little black hoofs pounding across the short-cropped clover of the meadow. She ran across the pasture and back in a sweeping



circle. Then she ran around the patient work horses, kicking up her heels in her excitement. Dan and his brothers had stood beside their father, watching her.

"Say, can she ever run!" Lloyd had exclaimed.

"She can run all right," Dad had agreed. "Pretty light-boned for a farm horse, though."

"You're not going to sell her, are you, Dad?" Dan had asked.

"Oh, I guess we can spare her a little hay again next winter," his father had replied, a twinkle in his eye. The brothers looked at each other knowingly. "I think your mother likes her pretty well," Dad went on. "She picked a good name for her — Comet."

Yes, the whole family was pleased with Comet. She was a gentle little thing, for all her high spirits, and she had been with her mother so much that Dan was sure it would be no trick to break her. They'd start this summer, probably. He was thrilled as he thought how it would feel to be on Comet's back as she raced across the field. Why, it would seem like flying.

The boys were not far from the house

when they were startled by a sharp, surprised little nicker. Turning quickly, they saw Bess across the fence in the little pasture where she and Comet were often kept. She was pacing back and forth, ears erect, tail switching. Comet was nowhere to be seen.

Then a disturbance in the tall grass on the other side of the pasture caught Dan's eye. He lit out on a run, Lloyd and Arthur on his heels.

A few moments later the boys gasped at what they saw. Comet was caught in the barbed-wire fence. She was on her side in the trampled grass, her hind legs caught between two strands of the wire. Cuts and scratches covered her slender legs, and one ugly gash spurted bright red blood over the green grass. The colt's head was thrown back and her lips were flecked with foam. she was struggling frantically to free herself from the punishing wire.

"Dad! Dad!" shouted Arthur. At the sudden noise the colt started kicking even more forcefully against the cruel wires.

"Pipe down," Dan commanded in a low voice. "The folks have gone to New Holland — don't you remember?" He dropped

to his knees beside the colt's head. His voice was calm as he spoke to her, his big hands were gentle as he patted the sweat-stained neck.

"Poor old girl — easy now, Comet, easy! You'll be all right." Gradually, as Dan's big, firm hands moved over the straining body, the colt quieted. She stopped thrashing her legs and lay still. But the blood was still spurting steadily from the deep gash in her leg. Dan looked up to see Arthur biting his lower lip and Lloyd looking on helplessly.

"Shall I go get help?" Lloyd asked.

"There isn't time. She'll bleed to death if we don't do something soon," said Dan, his voice still low. "Get the wire cutters," he went on, "and some old clean clothes — you know where Mom keeps them, Arthur — and the disinfectant and a bucket of hot water. I'll stay with Comet."

Lloyd and Arthur seemed relieved to have something to do, and wasted no time. Lloyd was soon back with the wire cutters and the two boys clipped the wire loose from the fence and worked it gently from the colt's legs. Dan kept up a steady stream of soft, gentle talk to Comet. She seemed

to know that he was trying to help her, and lay quite still. By the time she was freed from the wire, Arthur arrived, spilling water over his feet in his haste.

Quickly Dan tied a clean cloth tightly around the bleeding leg. For ten minutes he held it in place. But when he loosened it, the blood spurted as freely as before. Comet lay stretched out, her once-glossy coat stained with blood and sweat, her eyes rolling. Bess circled the group, nervous and worried.

"Maybe she's lost too much blood," said Arthur, almost in a whisper. Dan said nothing, but tightened the strip of cloth again and held it firmly in place. It just had to work. He couldn't let Comet die. But was he doing the right thing? He tried to think what his father would do.

Comet simply lay there, still as death, not even flinching as the strong-smelling disinfectant touched her flesh. Only the steady rise and fall of her side told Dan she still breathed. Was she going to die?

Then, just as he was washing out the last cut, a soft nickering made him look up. Weakly Comet raised her head and looked at him.

"Say, I think you're going to be all right," he cried, relieved. Arthur's face brightened, and Lloyd reached out a gentle hand to pat Comet's soft nose.

"How did you know what to do, Dan?" Arthur asked, now that they could talk. "I was scared stiff."

"Oh, I've helped Dad doctor the stock sometimes. It — it just sort of comes natural." Dan himself wasn't sure how he had known what to do for Comet. He looked down at his big hands.

"I guess a person can do the things he's cut out for," he said slowly, with a funny grin at his brothers, "even if he does have ten thumbs."

Don't, David, Don't

"Hey, Ruth, come here," David shouted to his sister. "Come at once and see what I have found." David was bending over the flower bed and his eyes sparkled with mischief.

"Come quickly," he urged. "Hurry, or

you'll be too late. I want to show you something really nice."

Ruth came running and asked eagerly, "Where? What is it?"

"There!" David pointed. "Isn't it nice?"

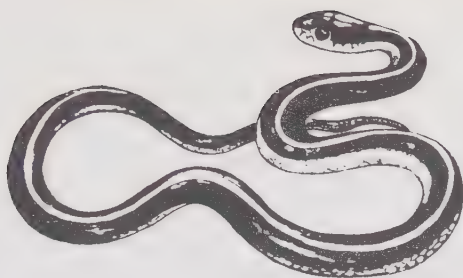
"Eeeeeeeek!" screamed Ruth. "A snake! Kill it, David. Get a stick and kill it." Ruth ran a safe distance away.

David laughed. "My, you would think a lion was after you," he said. "That snake is harmless. It's likely more frightened than you are, if that were possible." David grabbed the snake by the tail and held it, squirming and twisting, in front of himself. "See, it doesn't hurt me. All it does is stick out its little red tongue. Here, let me show you how beautiful it is." David started running toward his sister.

"Don't, David, don't!" Ruth screamed, turning white.

But her brother wasn't ready to stop teasing. "I'll bring it over to you," he laughed, "and you can put it into your pocket and keep it for a pet. You can take it along to school and all the other girls in grade four will be jealous of you."

Half angrily, Ruth ordered her brother to stay away from her. "Don't you dare



bring that thing close to me."

"Oh, you're just a scaredy-cat," David said scornfully. "Aren't you ever going to grow up? When I was ten, I wasn't afraid of anything, but you're trembling all the time. I never saw such a baby! Why can't you be brave like I am?" David gave the wiggling snake a playful toss and sent it flying toward Ruth.

"Eee-ooww!" cried Ruth, as she ducked. She turned and raced for the house. Still shaking from the scare David had given her, she raced upstairs and threw herself on the bed. "When will I ever stop being so afraid?" she sobbed into her pillow. She knew she was acting like a baby, being afraid of snakes. David had told her so often, but she was still afraid. It had hurt her to

have David laugh at her and call her a baby. It seemed she could still hear him scoffing, "Why can't you be brave?"

Why? Why? Ruth wondered, too.

Ruth wanted so much to be able to do brave things. "Someday I'll show David that I can be brave, too," she told herself in a determined way. "I'll show him that I am not afraid."

Ruth tried to sound brave and convincing, but inside she knew she was just as jumpy and frightened as she had always been. Maybe she would never be brave like David. The thought made her want to cry some more. But then she jumped up and dried her face. If David saw she had been crying, he would say she was still a baby for sure.

At the dinner table Ruth wasn't hungry. Like a tired little mouse, she just nibbled at her food. Mother noticed that something was wrong.

"Aren't you feeling well?" she asked.

Ruth just stared at her plate. "I'm not sick," she mumbled. "I'm just not hungry. That's all."

"What was the screaming I heard before dinner?" Father asked, looking first at David and then at Ruth.

David's eyes shifted uneasily. "Aw," he said, "that was just Ruth yelling because she saw a tiny little snake."

"But you chased me with it." Ruth's voice trembled. "You said you were going to put it into my pocket and you threw it at me."

"Now, David," Mother chided. "You know you shouldn't tease Ruth like that."

"But she's ten," David mumbled, "and she should be old enough..."

"It doesn't matter how old she is," said Mother firmly. "It upsets her. I wouldn't care to have a snake thrown at me either." She gave David a stern look.

"I didn't mean to scare her," David said, squirming in his chair. He wished girls weren't such babies, afraid of everything and crying over nothing.

"We'll put David to work this afternoon," Father said. "Maybe that will take care of some of his extra energy. Paul Coblentz asked me to come and help him repair his line fence, and David can come along and help."

Father put his fork down and reached for another slice of bread. "Please pass the potatoes again, Mother," He said. "They

are extra good today." Father smiled at Mother in the way he always did when he bragged on her cooking. Mother was holding little Mary Ann on her lap, feeding her jello.

"Maybe Ruth would like to go along, too," Mother suggested as she passed the potatoes to Father. "Would you, Ruth?"

"No," Ruth said quickly. "I'd rather just stay at home." She didn't explain why she didn't want to go, but she was thinking about Spike, the Coblentz's big cross dog. Spike always barked when anyone passed. Just thinking of him made Ruth shiver. But she knew better than admit to David that she was afraid. He would laugh like he always did.

Ruth did the dishes while Mother put Mary Ann to sleep. Then she went outside and sat on the swing under the tree in the yard. Her father and David had already gone to Coblentz's. She felt lonely without anything to do. She swung slowly until she grew tired of that. Then she went to the garden and pulled some weeds from the carrot row. She was finished and just ready to go ask her mother if there was anything she could do for her, when she heard Moth-

er calling from the porch. "Ruth! Ruth!"

There was something different about the way Mother was calling.

"Yes, Mom, here I am in the garden."

"Come here, quickly!"

"Why...why?" Ruth thought. "What does Mother want? She sounded so....so....so frightened...or in a hurry, or something." Hurrying to the house, Ruth burst into the kitchen. She stopped, gasping in alarm.

Mother was washing Mary Ann's face with a wet towel. The towel was stained with splotches of bright red. Blood still oozed from a long cut on Mary Ann's forehead. She was crying in frightened little jerks and Mother was trying to quiet her and stop the bleeding.

"What...what happened, Mom?"

"She fell," Mom said quietly, "but I don't think it's too serious." Her voice sounded strained, as though she were trying hard to stay calm.

"Please bring me the bandages from the drawer in the bedroom," Mother said. Ruth ran to obey. In only a few seconds she was back.

"I wonder if she shouldn't have stitches," Mother mused thoughtfully, examining the

cut more closely. Quickly Ruth turned her head the other way so she couldn't see the wound. She felt queer in her stomach.

"I believe we should take her to the doctor," said Mother, placing a bandage tightly over the cut. "Ruth, run down to Coblantz's and tell Dad to come home. It won't take you long. It's only three-quarters of a mile."

Ruth turned to go. That funny feeling in her stomach was worse now.

"Tell Dad it's not really serious, but I think she'll need stitches," Mother said.

"Okay," Ruth said.

II. I'm Not Afraid

Ruth ran down the road until she was out of breath, and then she slowed to a walk. It was a hot summer afternoon. She took out her handkerchief to wipe the sweat from her face, but she never stopped walking. All the way she was telling herself, "I'm not afraid. Spike won't bite. I'm going to be brave this time."

But that queer feeling inside her stomach was still there. It helped a little to keep repeating, "I'm not afraid. I'm going to be

brave." It helped a little, but not much.

She was nearly there. Maybe Spike was back in the field with the men. Maybe he was asleep in the doghouse. Maybe she could slip past the doghouse and up to the door without awakening him. She was almost at the mailbox and Spike was still not in sight.

"I'm not afraid. I'm not afraid. I'm going to be brave. I'm not going to be afraid."

She was on the lawn now. She didn't walk on the lane because her feet made too much noise on the gravel. "Thump-thump.... thumpity-thump," went her heart, so loudly that it seemed even if the dog was asleep, he would be awakened by the noise.

"I'm not afraid. I'm not afraid. I'm n--"

"Woof! Woof, woof!" Suddenly Spike was right there, barking at her. His long teeth shone white in the sun, looking pointed and sharp.

Ruth jumped. Her heart nearly stopped. She almost screamed, but somehow she choked back the sound. She wanted to turn around and run and run and never stop. But she didn't. She didn't run and she didn't scream. She felt very weak and helpless—a frightened young girl that didn't know what

to do or where to go. She started to mumble, "I'm not afraid..." but then she stopped. It was no use. She was afraid — very much afraid.

"Woof, woof." Spike was coming toward her now, and his mouth was open. Was he going to bite her before anyone came out of the house? Maybe she could still run home. But no, Spike would catch her if she did. A large dog could run many times faster than a girl. Besides, she could not go back, for Mother was depending on her to tell Father about Mary Ann.

Ruth took another step toward the house. Spike stood in front of her, right on the walk, blocking her path. From deep down in his throat rumbled a growl. Shaking with



fear, Ruth forced herself to take another step toward him. Maybe the dog would move.

"Woof, woof!" barked Spike sharply. A warning gleam in his eyes seemed to say, "If you take another step, I'll bite you!"

Ruth stopped. Any moment she expected to feel Spike's fangs in her leg. Why did no one come out of the house to call the dog off? Maybe no one was at home. Maybe they were all taking their after-dinner naps.

Then suddenly Ruth made up her mind. She would not go home. She would go behind the barn and look for Father and David herself. As she walked away from the house her legs felt stiff and as heavy as buckets of water. What if Spike sneaked up behind her and bit her legs? Once she whirled around, half expecting to see him leaping on her, but he was still standing on the walk, watching her. His ears were perked forward. Hardly daring to breathe, lest he follow her, Ruth walked on. All at once she saw the men. Only a short distance away they were were working. She ran.

Her father looked up in surprise. Ruth was panting so much she could hardly talk. Her face was red and hot. "Mary Ann hurt

her head and Mother said..." Ruth caught her breath before she continued. "Mother said you should come home to take her to the doctor."

"What happened? How badly is she hurt?" There was a note of alarm in Father's voice.

"It was bleeding, but Mother said to say it...it's not very serious."

"I'll come home right away. And David, too." In a few quick words, Father explained to Mr. Coblentz what had happened.

"Come on, let's go," Father said.

Her father walked so fast that Ruth found it hard to keep up. When they were even with the Coblentz's house, Spike rushed out, barking and showing his teeth. Ruth scrambled over to the other side of her father, hoping David wouldn't notice. "I can't see why the Coblentz's have such a cross dog," she said, trying not to show how nervous she was. "They must not like to have visitors or they wouldn't keep him around."

"Well, I hope it isn't that," Father said. "I think they got him when he was just a little puppy and didn't realize he would become so cross. They should get rid of him. How did you get past Spike on the way up, Ruth?"

Weren't you afraid?"

Ashamed of herself, Ruth hung her head. She wished so much she could say she had not been afraid, but she knew she had been.

"I didn't know Ruth was so brave," said David, looking at his sister admiringly. "I didn't think she would come over here all alone."

"But...but..." Ruth stammered. "But I wasn't...wasn't brave. I was afraid — so afraid." She caught her breath at the memory of it.

"Being afraid isn't a sign that you aren't brave, Ruth," Father said as they walked along. "Real bravery is when you are very much afraid, but you go ahead and do it anyhow. You're a brave girl, Ruth."

Being afraid isn't a sign you aren't brave. Ruth had never thought of that before. Was it really true? Had she been brave after all?

They were out on the road now, and Father was walking faster. Ruth had to run to keep up. It was then that she noticed that the aching feeling inside herself was gone.

Measuring a Promise

The cold, January wind blew fiercely against the Bontrager children as they trudged to school. Its icy breath seemed to go right through their clothes and its strong fingers grabbed at Sam's paper bag. But Sam hardly even noticed. He held the bag tightly and kept his head down. This was the first day of school since Sam's birthday. Just wait until John and Elam saw what he had made on Saturday. He smiled to himself and walked even faster.

At school Sam wasn't disappointed. Soon he was surrounded by curious children, eager to see what was in the large brown bag. Sam couldn't help but feel pretty important.

"This is my birthday present from Uncle Jake," he said, pulling a large green and white object from the bag. "Well, this isn't the present, but the tools I used to make it are."

"A birdhouse!" exclaimed Sarah. "Surely, you didn't make that!"

"Of course I did," retorted Sam proudly.

"What tools did your uncle give you?" John wanted to know.

"Do your uncles always give you birthday presents?" Elam asked at the same time. Elam and John were both in Sam's grade at school.

Sam laughed a bit smugly. "No, our uncles don't usually give us presents," he said, answering the last question first. "But I guess he remembered how much I played with his jigsaw. That's what he gave me — a jigsaw."

Everyone wanted a turn to look at the birdhouse. They felt its glossy paint and smooth corners. Sam explained how he had used sandpaper to make it so smooth and then he told them about the next project he was working on — a pull toy for little Joseph.

"Dad gave me the idea for the pull toy," Sam admitted. "He drew a duck and showed me how to fasten the wheels so the duck would wobble."

"Say," interrupted Ivan Troyer suddenly. "I have some good wheels at home that came off an old toy truck. Could you make a wagon for me? I'd give you my...my..." He was trying to think what he would have to give in exchange for the toy wagon.

"How big are the wheels?" Sam asked.

"About an inch through the middle, I think," answered Ivan. "I know, I'll give my super ball in exchange." He remembered how Sam had admired it once.

"It's a deal," Sam agreed. "Now we have to draw a wagon exactly like the one you want me to make."

By the end of the week Sam had a dozen orders. He enjoyed looking them over and especially liked to think of all the different things he would get in exchange. But when he started making the things, he discovered that each item took longer than he had expected it would. His enthusiasm wore off in a hurry. It took a whole week of evenings to make Ivan's wagon. It was very well-made, though, and Ivan was pleased with it.

The next week Sam didn't work with the jigsaw at all. On Saturday afternoon he had free time, but there was good sledding. In the evening he got lost in a storybook. And so it went week after week. Again and again the children at school asked if their orders would soon be finished, and each time Sam promised to have them done soon.

Then came the Sunday in February when the Bontrager family was invited to Uncle Jakes' house for dinner. How eagerly Sam awaited the day. He put the little notebook with the orders into his pocket. He knew Uncle Jake would be interested in hearing what he was doing with the jigsaw. So that afternoon when Uncle Jake asked, "Well, Sam, is your jigsaw still working?" he got the notebook and handed it to him.

Uncle Jake leafed through the notebook. "Hmm-m," he smiled, "a super ball for a wagon; a pen for a pair of toy horses. You must have quite a collection by this time."

Sam only shrugged, but his brother Dave spoke up quickly. "Nope, just the super ball, because Sam hasn't made the other things."

Sam darted an angry look at his brother as he felt his face get hot. He dropped his eyes in embarrassment before his uncle.

Uncle Jake chuckled. "Well, he can't expect to be paid before he gets those things made." Then more seriously, he asked, "Are you still taking orders, Sam?"

Sam was glad he could say he hadn't taken any for quite a long while, but then Dave

spoke up, "What's the use of ordering things from him if he doesn't make what he has on order?"

Uncle Jake didn't make any comment on what Dave had said. He just handed the notebook back to Sam and said, "Just be careful you don't bite off more than you can chew."

Sam wondered what Uncle Jake meant by that remark, but he didn't ask. The other boys were getting their wraps on to go sled riding and Sam was eager to join them. They rushed out the door and down the steps to the icy sidewalk below.

Afterwards nobody knew exactly how it had happened, but when the other boys got up from where they had suddenly piled on that icy spot, Sam couldn't get up. He sat there holding his ankle and trying hard not to let any tears squeeze out. He had never had such pain before. He was sure it must be broken.

It really was broken. The X-rays at the hospital showed it wasn't a bad break, but Sam came home with a cast on his leg. The cast was clean and white and very important looking. It made Sam feel important, too. He couldn't go help with the chores or go to

school, but he didn't mind the first few days. There were books to read and it was kind of fun to do his school lessons at home. He didn't have to bring in wood or carry ashes for Grandma, who lived in the other end of the house.

II. Gloves for Sam

However, the novelty soon wore off. Sam found out he didn't like to be left out of things, even work. Time dragged. Then Mother brought in his jigsaw and box of wood scraps and suggested he work on that.

Sam leafed through his little notebook and wondered why he had ever thought he wanted to make things for his schoolmates. He was trying to figure out which would be the easiest and quickest to make when Grandmother walked in.

"Well, I see you can keep yourself occupied," she smiled at Sam. "What are you making now?"

Sam shrugged. Then he noticed the new gloves Grandmother had in her hand. "Who are the gloves for?" he asked.

"I made them for Dave," Grandmother

answered. "You see, he's doing all my chores alone these days and I saw his gloves had a big hole in them. Do you think he will like them?"

Sam nodded as he felt the soft wool and slipped his hands into them. He remembered the big holes in his own gloves and wondered what he could possibly do to earn a pair, too. He handed them back with a longing look. "What can I do for you, Grandmother?" he asked. "Isn't there anything a boy on crutches could do?"

"Are your gloves in bad shape, too?" Grandmother asked. "Maybe I can make you a pair later, but I must make Lena's quilt first. She brought me a box of shirt patches and said she needs another quilt. You won't be going out for a while yet, anyhow, will you?"

"Oh, let me cut the patches for you," Sam exclaimed.

"That would be nice," Grandmother agreed, "but you're kept pretty busy with your lessons, and didn't I hear someone say you have a lot of toys promised to your friends?"

"Sure, but I'm not taking any more orders and I'll find time to do it. If I could come over every afternoon to help, do you think you could have my gloves finished by the time my cast comes off?"

"Perhaps," said Grandmother, "but.."

"Then I'll do it," Sam declared. "I'll come over every afternoon to cut patches, and I think I could learn to sew them together, too, if you'll let me."

Grandmother smiled at Sam's enthusiasm, but she still hesitated. "Better be careful you don't bite off more than you can chew," she said.

Sam looked up in astonishment. Why, that was the same thing Uncle Jake had said. "I'll come every day," he insisted. "You'll see. If something happens that I can't come in the afternoon, I'll come in the evening or the next morning."

Grandmother was still slow to accept Sam's offer. She shook her head, but then a smile lighted up her face. "All right, Sam," she said. "I'll measure that promise with the gloves. How well you keep it will determine how soon you get your gloves." She smiled to herself as she left and Sam vowed never to miss a day. He

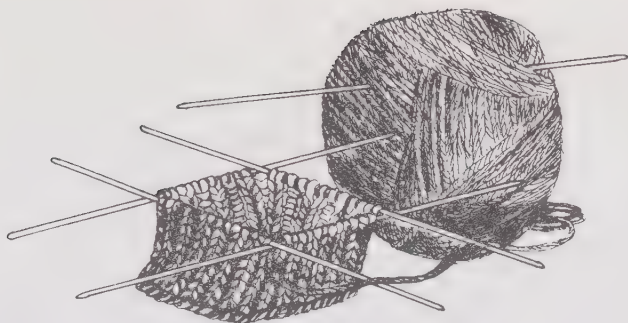
would show Grandma that he could keep his promise.

The next two afternoons Sam cut patches. It was fun. Grandmother was good company and it was nice to watch her get started on his gloves, too.

The third day Sam didn't get his school lessons done until late in the afternoon, so he decided to wait until evening to go over to Grandmother's house. He did go in the evening, but only for an hour. Grandmother hardly got started knitting until he left.

The day after that Mother told Sam he'd better go cut quilt patches in the forenoon because she had some work for him in the afternoon. But Sam decided to wait until evening. However, in the evening company came and he didn't get to go over after all. He felt pretty guilty about missing a day, but when he went over the next morning, Grandmother accepted his excuse without a word. As soon as he was there, she started knitting again. Sam thought the work on the gloves wasn't going very fast. He wondered why.

The next week Sam missed three days. It seemed there were always too many other things to do. Grandmother never complained



or reminded him of his promise. She always seemed happy to have him come and she always knitted on his gloves while he was there.

Four weeks passed in this way, with Sam's visits to Grandmother's becoming fewer and fewer. Sam remembered his promise, and vowed to keep it again and again, but each day when it was time to go cut patches, he could think of so many things he would rather do.

Then at last came the happy day when the cast was removed. The doctor told Sam not to go back to school for another week, until he was used to walking again. That meant he still had sometime to help Grandmother.

That afternoon he was busily cutting patches once more.

"How many of your orders did you fill these weeks?" Grandmother asked.

"Orders?" Sam tried to think what she was talking about.

"Weren't you making things for your friends?"

"Ah, yes, I guess, but they aren't really important. They're just little wooden toys," Sam answered lamely. He felt his face turn red.

"All promises are important," Grandmother said.

Sam wished his family would forget about his jigsaw. And anyway, Grandmother did not have his gloves finished either. It was five weeks since she had started on them. Why was she so slow?

The day came for Sam to go back to school and his gloves weren't finished yet. He couldn't understand it. He needed them so badly. But he was ashamed to ask for them. Every time he mentioned his need for gloves to Mother, she said that Grandmother was making some for him.

Finally the thumb of his left glove tore off completely. Sam's hand was almost fro-

zen by the time he came home that day. He was feeling very sorry for himself, too. He went right over into Grandmother's kitchen and sat on a chair close beside her, rubbing his cold hands. He made sure she would notice his ragged gloves.

Grandmother, who was sitting at the sewing machine with the quilt top, laid down her work and smiled at him. "How was school today? Are you pretty well caught up with your work?"

"Sure," Sam mumbled, "there wasn't much to get caught up on."

Grandmother saw that Sam wasn't very happy and she tried to cheer him up by talking. "Does your leg bother you a lot?" she asked, a note of sympathy in her voice.

"No, but my hands sure do," Sam said glumly.

Grandmother looked at his red hands and said, "Well, why didn't you get those gloves finished?"

Sam stared at her speechlessly. What could Grandmother be talking about? Why, he couldn't knit. He hadn't ever knitted a single stitch all his life!

Grandmother smiled. "Didn't I say I would measure your promise with those gloves?"

Sam nodded.

"The promise is measuring out to be pretty long, isn't it?" Grandmother's eyes were searching Sam's.

Sam shrugged, feeling more and more uncomfortable. "I cut some patches for you, Grandmother."

"Yes, I know you did. And every time you cut patches, I knitted on your gloves. But that was the only time I worked on them. If you had come even half as often as you promised you would, the gloves would have been done a long time ago." She smiled at Sam. "Do you remember what I said the day you wanted to promise to cut quilt patches every day?"

Sam shook his head. Then he remembered and grinned. "Don't bite off more than you can chew."

"That's right," Grandmother said. "It's just another way of saying, 'Don't promise more than you can do.'"

Sam laughed in spite of himself. "That even rhymes," he said. "Don't bite off more than you can chew, or promise more than you can do."

Grandmother smiled, too. "I'll finish your gloves now, Sam," she said. "Perhaps

you'd better go do your chores."

Sam ran out the door. He was in a hurry because he wanted to cut quilt patches for Grandmother that evening. "This time I won't forget," he thought to himself, "but I won't make any promises."

Bird Trades

The swallow is a mason,
And underneath the eaves
He builds a nest, and plasters it
With mud and hay and leaves.

Of all the weavers that I know,
The oriole is the best;
High on the branches of the tree
She hangs her cozy nest.

The woodpecker is hard at work, —
A carpenter is he, —
And you may hear him hammering
His nest high up in a tree.

Some little birds are miners;
Some build upon the ground;
And busy little tailors, too,
Among the birds are found.

The Crooked Tree

"There," said ten-year-old Lydia as she gave an angry look at the clock and seated herself in a chair to face it. "I've got to stay here in this old chair facing you for a half hour, all because of Mother." The angry girl paused to catch her breath. "I don't think it's a bit fair — no, I don't!" She gave the faithful clock a scowl. "You can tell her so if you want to."

All at once Lydia stopped, and her face began to turn very red. She felt ashamed of her angry words. She was glad that the clock could not hear what she had said, much less repeat it to her mother. She was astonished a moment later to hear a voice answer her.

"If that is the way you feel about it, why don't you tell her so?"

Lydia whirled around to face the sound of the voice. "Oh, Grandma!" she cried in confusion and shame. "I didn't know you were in the room."

Lydia thought for a moment that Grandma's face would break into a smile, but then she saw that her soft brown eyes were very

serious. "But I am here, as you see," she said kindly. Then she waited for Lydia to explain her angry words.

"I'm sorry I said what I did — really, I am," said Lydia.

"I suppose you are, Lydia, but why did you say them?"

Lydia hung her head.

"You must have thought those bad words, or you would never have said them," Grandma rebuked. "You must guard your thoughts the next time."

"I'll try to," said Lydia humbly. "But why is it, Grandma, that Mother is so very particular about every little thing I do?"

"Little thing?"

"Yes, little thing," Lydia repeated. "I'll know enough to do as I should when I grow up. I want to have a good time now, and not be bothered with rules and punishments and sitting on chairs, staring at clocks."

"So that is how you feel about it?" said Grandma, lifting her eyebrows.

"Yes, I'm sure I'll know how to behave when I grow up, but it seems Mother thinks she must be so strict." Again the angry look came over Lydia's face.

Grandma sighed, then pulled the rocking

chair over and sat down on it, facing the unhappy girl.

"Do you remember the tree you children like to climb so well out on the farm?" she asked.

"Tree?" Lydia asked in surprise. Why did Grandma change the subject so fast?

"Yes, the tree you like to climb—the one in the yard, right in front of the house?"

"Oh, that one," said Lydia with a smile.



"You mean the one that grew so crooked that it forms a seat?"

"Yes," said Grandma, "but did you ever wonder how that tree became so crooked?"

"Why, no," said Lydia. "I just thought it grew that way."

"It did, but there's a story that goes with it," said Grandma. "Would you like to hear it?"

"Yes, please," said Lydia with a look at the clock. "You see, I have to stay here for half an hour. I thought it would be so long that I could hardly stand it. A story will help a lot."

"Very well," said Grandma with a smile. "I think you will like to hear about that tree. My father brought it from the woods and planted it when it was very small."

"Why did he choose such a crooked little tree?" Lydia asked curiously.

"But it wasn't crooked then," Grandma answered quickly. "It was a nice straight sapling, the straightest he could find. He carried water for it all through the dry season, and it was not long before new leaves began to grow, which pleased my father very much."

"About how big were you then?" Lydia wondered.

"Just a very small girl, so small that I can't remember about it, but I heard my father tell it many times. One day my mother and father were working in the garden when one of them noticed a queer cloud. Even as they watched, the cloud came rapidly closer."

"A queer cloud?" asked Lydia with a puzzled look. "What was it like?"

"It had the appearance of a funnel and the small part was swaying back and forth like a tail. The funnel was black and there was a terrible roaring — like a dozen trains."

"What was it, Grandma?"

"It was a tornado, and it came so fast that before they could run to shelter, it had done its work and left as quickly as it had come."

Lydia almost squirmed in the chair in her eagerness to hear the rest of the story. "What did it do? What happened? Were they hurt?"

"The house was still standing," Grandma went on, "but the barn was down. And many of the trees near the house were torn up by the roots. My father was badly injured, and

it was all my mother could do to get him into the house. He was not able to be out for a long time, and no one thought of the little tree he had cared for so faithfully."

"Ohhhh," Lydia shivered, thinking about the tornado. "I'm glad I wasn't there. That must have been a terrible mess, if the barn was broken down."

"It was bad enough," Grandma said. "One day after many weeks my mother helped Father into the yard. It did not look like the yard he was used to seeing, for Mother had been too busy with her regular work and taking care of Father, too, to clean up much of the mess the tornado had left. My father looked for the little tree, but he could not see it, and he was too weak to go out to where he had planted it."

"Maybe it was torn up by the roots, too," Lydia suggested.

"No," said Grandma. "Mother went out to see if she could find it for him. She discovered that a large limb of a tree nearby had blown across it and had held it nearly to the ground, but it was alive and growing. It was some time before my father was strong enough to cut that limb away from his little tree. He rejoiced to find it still living."

"Was the tree crooked then?" Lydia wanted to know.

"Yes, it was — very crooked. Father tried and tried to straighten it, but his attempts failed. It had been crooked too long and it had grown that way. There is a saying that 'as the twig is bent, the tree will grow.' It works for other things as well as for trees."

Grandma looked very hard at Lydia, as if to say, "You can't be naughty when you're young, and not show it when you grow up."

"I think I know what you mean," said Lydia meekly.

Just then Mother came in. "Your half hour is up," she said. "You may go and play now."

"Has it been a whole half hour?" asked Lydia in surprise.

"I'm afraid I've spoiled your punishment," said Grandma, as she turned to Lydia's mother. "I'm sorry."

"No, you didn't spoil it," said Lydia. "You just made me see the good of it. I don't want to grow up to be a crooked tree."

The Big Boy

Elmer Weaver ran until he was out of breath, then he slowed down to a brisk walk. He was on his way to school, carrying his dinner bucket in one hand and a few, straight hickory sticks in the other. In his overcoat pocket were half a dozen baler twines.

But even more important than the sticks and baler twines was the grand idea Elmer was carrying in his head. It had come to him suddenly the day before as he had been looking at a picture in his history book. The picture showed an Indian boy, about his own age, shooting a bow and arrow. The story said that most of the Indian boys were such good shots that they could shoot a penny which had been stuck upright into the top of a post.

For a minute Elmer had sat daydreaming. He imagined he was that Indian boy, and that he, too, was a sure shot with every arrow that left his bow. In his daydream, he aimed an arrow at a tall deer with big antlers, then watched it crumple to its death as the arrow hit its target.

Elmer roused from his dreaming with a sigh of regret. He had been born too late to go hunting with a bow and arrow. He had never even seen a real bow and arrow, just as he had never seen a big wild buck.

Just then Elmer's dream was born. Why not make a bow and arrow, and pretend that he was an Indian boy like the one in the picture. Of course, doing it all by himself wasn't much fun, but he wouldn't have to do it by himself. He was pretty sure of that.

Since it was after recess, Elmer decided to keep his idea a secret. He'd go into the woods that evening and get some sticks for himself and the other boys. Then he'd bring plenty of twine along the next day, too, and they would make their bows and arrows together at school.

As Elmer trotted along, he was glad he was finally one of the big boys in school. He wasn't really one of the oldest, but he was tall for his age and simply full of ideas. Elmer felt pleased as he thought of how even the eighth graders accepted his ideas and showed enthusiasm for them.

The minute Elmer was on the playground, the other boys crowded around him. They were curious about those sticks, and the

idea of making bows and arrows caught their fancy. "Let's pretend we're Indians," suggested Amos Miller. "We can divide into different tribes and have an Indian war."

"Wouldn't it be sort of dangerous, shooting arrows at each other?" asked Junior Byler, a seventh grader who took everything serious.

"Oh, we won't make our arrows very sharp," said Elmer drily, his voice sounding a little disgusted. "The Indians used flint for their arrowheads, but we won't be able to find anything harder than iron."

The other boys laughed and Junior got red in the face, realizing too late that none of the other boys would think of shooting even wooden arrows at each other.

"I know what, we can go hunting," suggested Amos. "We can pretend that the fence posts are animals and shoot at them. Then later on when we're better at shooting, we can have smaller targets."

Elmer had thought the same thing, and he almost resented Amos for saying it before he did. However, he tried to hide his feelings. "We can even have shooting matches," he said. "You know, see who can hit a certain target most often."

The bell rang just then and the work on the bows had to be discontinued. At recess the boys hurried back out. By this time the six oldest boys had each selected one of Elmer's sticks for his bow. Some of the younger boys had found sticks under the big tree in the corner of the playground.

"Your bows won't be any good," Elmer told them. "You have to use hickory sticks. They bend without breaking."

"But they're still better than none," said one of the third graders. He had his knife and was peeling the bark from his maple stick.

Making the bows was simple enough. All the boys had to do was cut slits into the ends of their sticks and tie the right length of twine to it. There was some discussion as to how long the twine should be. Some of the boys thought it should be short enough to be quite tight, while others thought they should have the string loose enough so they could pull it back when shooting an arrow.

As it turned out, the boys weren't shooting nearly as soon as they had thought they would be. When the bows were completed, they selected straight maple twigs to serve as arrows. Elmer was the first one to fit

an arrow into his bow, pull back, and let go. But instead of whizzing through the air as he had thought it would, it turned somersault a few times and dropped to the ground.

"Your string isn't long enough," said Amos. "Here, let me try."

Amos strung his bow, let go of his arrow, only to have the same thing happen. One after the other the boys tried their bows, but each one proved to be as unsuccessful as the one before. "Something's wrong with our arrows," Elmer said. "It can't be the bows, because they all act the same, even if they aren't made the same."

"Maybe we just don't know how to shoot a bow and arrow," said Junior.

Teacher John came out just then. His eyes lighted up when he saw the bows. "Say, that's a good idea," he said. Then he saw the dejected looks on the boys' faces. "What's wrong? Don't they work?"

"The arrows just turn somersault," Amos said. "See?" He shot an arrow from his bow to show the teacher how they flipped crazily and dropped to the ground.

"Not much chance of killing a deer or a rabbit with an arrow like that, is there?" chuckled Teacher John, picking up the ar-

row and reaching for Amos's bow. It did the same thing for him.

"The Indians, of course, had heavier tips on their arrows," he said thoughtfully. "And if I remember right from the pictures I've seen, they had feathers on the ends of their arrows."

Elmer remembered the picture in his history book. As soon as school took up again, he got out the book and studied the picture. Teacher John had been right. There was something on the end of the Indian boy's arrow. Elmer couldn't be sure if it was a real feather or just a carved design. He decided to look up "Bow and Arrow" in the World Book. Maybe it would show a better picture.

The World Book didn't give much information under "Bow and Arrow," but it did say, "See American Indians." Elmer got that book and was delighted to find all the information he needed and then some. By the time he went home he was sure he could make an arrow that would fly.

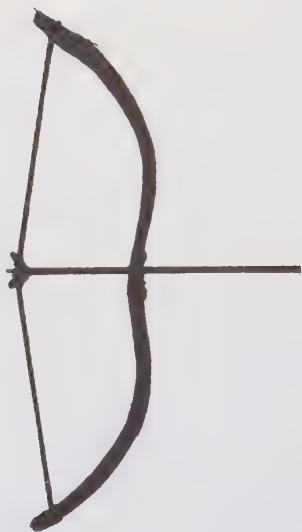
Elmer rushed home from school and did his chores in record time. Then he went to the shop with a nice straight stick he had found on the way home from school. Very

carefully he made two slits into one end of the stick. Then dipping the two large feathers he had found for the purpose into some glue, he carefully fastened them into the slits. He simply couldn't resist trying the idea out, so he placed the arrow into the bow and shot it.

"WHIZZ!" The arrow shot across the shop without turning over once. It crashed into the opposite wall, then fell to the floor. When Elmer picked it up, he saw that both feathers had been knocked sideways, but that didn't bother him. He was too delighted and excited about his success. He carefully replaced the feathers and clamped the arrow into his dad's vise, where the feathers would be sure to stay in place while the glue dried.

II. More Than Size

Even before Elmer had reached the schoolhouse the next morning, he knew he was not the only boy who had made an arrow that flew. A group of boys were on the playground, eagerly shooting arrows and then running after them.



"Hey, Elmer," one of them cried out. "The feathers did the trick. You ought to see these arrows fly!"

"I've got one that flies, too," Elmer retorted, his feelings slightly ruffled. "Who made these?"

"Amos did," the boy answered. "He made five of them and brought them along. That means we can have our shooting contest today."

"But are you going to enter the contest with an arrow someone else made?" asked

Elmer. "That's not fair. If you win, you'll be winning with someone else's arrows. I think we should each make our own arrows."

"A-amos said we could use his arrows," the boy said, plainly upset by Elmer's attitude. "We can use them today and then make our own some other time."

"Anyone can make an arrow, once they know how," Elmer said. "It would be like copying, because you are going to make yours just like we made ours." He set his dinner bucket down, spun his bow, and sent his arrow flying through the air. He was pleased to see that it went farther than any of the other arrows. Either his arrow was better, or he knew better how to shoot it. He ran and picked up his arrow and sent it flying through the air again. It gave a satisfying whistle as it went, and it wasn't long until the other boys were standing by, admiring Elmer's skill.

More and more children were arriving at school. Among them was Elmer's cousin, a third grader. When he and Elmer were by themselves, they often had very good times. But the thing that bothered Elmer was that Daniel insisted on hanging around him in school, too. Elmer thought

Daniel should play with the little boys, since he was only in the third grade, and small for his age at that. Daniel, however, could not understand why they couldn't be friends at school just as well as anywhere else.

"Hey, Elmer, let me use your arrow," coaxed Daniel, running over to him with a crude, crooked bow.

"No, go shoot your own arrow," Elmer said. "You've got one."

"But it doesn't work right," answered Daniel, sounding hurt. "It just flips like yours did yesterday."

"Why don't you fix it up with feathers on the end?" Elmer sent his arrow flying across the playground again.

"I didn't know that would help," Daniel said. "Let me shoot yours. Just once. Please, Elmer."

"Nope!" Elmer said sharply, hoping to sound final enough that Daniel wouldn't ask again.

Daniel, however, wasn't one to give up easily. He followed Elmer around like a shadow, coaxing to shoot his arrow. The more he coaxed, the more determined Elmer became. When Daniel saw that his coaxing wasn't getting him anywhere, he

tried something else. The next time Elmer shot his arrow, Daniel was near the spot where it landed. Quickly he picked it up, fitted it into his bow, and was just about to shoot it when Elmer came running up.

"Give me that!" Elmer snapped, making a grab for it.

Daniel wasn't about to give up — not when he had almost done what he had wanted to do all morning. He ran a few steps, then shot the arrow before Elmer could stop him.

Something inside Elmer snapped. "Who do you think you are anyway?" he demanded. But Daniel didn't even stop to listen. When he saw that Elmer wasn't in any hurry to pick up his arrow, he ran over and got it himself. He turned his back and got ready to shoot it a second time.

Elmer strode over to Daniel, almost beside himself in anger. He raised his bow and brought it down upon his cousin with a smart whack.

Without hesitation, Daniel started to cry. The hickory stick had stung his back smartly but it had done more than that. It had hurt his feelings as well.

The minute Elmer saw Daniel cry, he came to his senses. "I'm sorry," he apol-

ogized quickly. "I didn't mean to hit you." He thrust the arrow into the younger boy's hand. "Here, take it. You may shoot it."

But Daniel couldn't forget his insult that easily. He turned away, refusing Elmer's peace offering. Elmer looked around. Teacher John was nowhere in sight, but he would be sure to hear about this. At that minute the schoolhouse door opened and the teacher stepped outside.

One glance was all it took to tell Teacher John that something was wrong. One more glance told him in which corner of the playground he was needed. In swift strides he walked over to Daniel. "What's wrong?" he asked.

By this time Elmer had taken his bow and arrow and walked off, trying to look unconcerned. It wasn't long, however, until Teacher John called him over and was asking him a few swift questions. "What made you hit Daniel?"

"H-he took my a-arrow and w-wouldn't give it back," stammered Elmer. Even as he said it, he knew it was a very poor excuse. He didn't sound or feel like a big boy now — a tall boy who was filled with good ideas and who could make a better arrow

than any of the other boys at school. And what Teacher John said next didn't make him feel any bigger.

"I spank my little boys at home when they get to fighting and hitting each other," he said, "They're two and three years old, and I think they ought to know better than to hit each other."

At the mention of a spanking Elmer's heart melted completely. He had never gotten a spanking at school before, and he hadn't dreamed he ever would. What would the other children think? He felt ashamed and small and frightened. Two big tears glistened in his eyes, and then rolled down his cheeks. Now there were two boys crying, and Elmer was one of them.

Elmer felt a hand on his shoulder. "Can you tell Daniel you're sorry you hit him?"

Elmer nodded his head, then said in a jerky voice, "I — I'm sorry."

Teacher John turned to Daniel. "Tell Elmer you're sorry you took his arrow. He should have given it to you willingly, but that still didn't make it right for you to take it by force."

Daniel apologized. It was plain that by this time he felt as bad about it as Elmer did.

Teacher John broke the silence by saying, "I think we'll let Daniel off this time, but Elmer, maybe you'd better stay in the rest of the morning and at the first recess, too. That will make you think twice before losing your temper again."

Elmer was so relieved that Teacher John wasn't going to spank him that he thought staying in was a very mild punishment. He followed Teacher John to the schoolhouse. When they reached the door, the teacher stepped aside to let Elmer enter first. Elmer looked down at the bow and arrow in his hand, swallowed hard, and managed to say, "Ah, would it be all r-right — I mean, if it's all right with you, I thought maybe Daniel could use these. I can make myself another one tonight."

Teacher John flashed Elmer a grateful smile. "That's a good idea, Elmer," he said. "You may go out and give them to Daniel before you come in."

Once more Elmer hesitated. He wished Teacher John had taken the bow and arrow out to Daniel. What would the others think of him — a big boy like him, giving up to a third grader like that? But then Elmer checked his thoughts right away. He knew

deep down that being a big boy wasn't a matter of how tall or how old he was, or how well he could do things. It was a matter of being unselfish, of keeping his temper, of sharing what he had with others, and of making things right that he had done wrong.

Elmer took a deep breath, bowed his head a little, then started across the playground with his bow and arrow.

The Chicken's Mistake

A little chick one day
Asked leave to go on the water,
Where she saw a duck with her brood at play,
Swimming and splashing about her.

"Indeed," she began to peep and cry,
When her mother wouldn't let her,
"If the ducks can swim there, why can't I?
Are they any bigger or better?"

Then the old hen answered, "Listen to me,
And hush your foolish talking;
Just look at your feet, and you will see
They were only made for walking."

But chicky wistfully eyed the brook
And didn't half believe her,
For she seemed to say by a knowing look,
Such stories couldn't deceive her.

And, as her mother was scratching the
She muttered, lower and lower, ground,
"I know I can go there and not be drowned,
And so I think I'll show her."

Then she made a plunge where the stream
And saw too late her blunder; was deep,
For she had hardly time to peep
When her foolish head went under.

And now I hope her fate will show
The child who my story is reading,
That those who are older sometimes know
What you will do well for heeding.

That each content in his place should dwell,
And envy not his brother;
And any part that is acted well
Is just as good as another.

For we all have our proper sphere below,
And this is a truth worth knowing;
You will come to grief if you try to go
Where you were not made for going.

Bothersome Brothers

"Mother, do you think this cake is done?" Ella Byler touched the top of the cake lightly with the tip of her finger.

"Do you remember how I told you to test it?" asked Mother.

"Oh, yes, with a toothpick," said Ella. She opened the drawer and got out the blue and white box. "Let's see, you said if the toothpick comes out clean, that means the cake is done."

"That's right," said Mother. "If any batter is unbaked, it will cling to the toothpick." She came and looked over Ella's shoulder. "The cake looks real nice, and it is finished. Carry it downstairs and set it on the table so it will cool."

Ella obeyed. Before long she was back in the kitchen. "What shall I do next?" she asked.

Mother glanced at the clock. "It's a little early to peel potatoes, so why don't you sweep the porch? Lydia has straightened up the house and is out in the garden getting lettuce. As soon as you are both done, you may help each other set the table."

Ella took the broom and went to the porch. She did not mind the long forenoon that lay before them. Cooking for the threshers was hard work, but it was interesting as well. They would stretch out the table as far as it would go and set it for fourteen men. All forenoon they would be busy preparing food for the hungry threshers. Mother had already fried the chicken and put it into the oven. There were potatoes to peel, lettuce to wash, pudding to mix, the cake to frost, and all kinds of other interesting things to do.

With big swishes Ella swept the porch. Then she called, "Mother, may I throw out these old stones Eli has put on the porch railing?"

Before Mother could answer, three-year-old Eli came running from the sandbox where he and his younger brother, Daniel, had been playing. "No, that's my rock collection," he cried.

"Rock collection!" scoffed Ella. "They are nothing but plain, ordinary stones."

"But I still want them," Eli insisted.

Mother came to the door. "Leave them there, Ella," she said. "Eli worked hard gathering them and if he still wants them, we'll let him keep them."

"I can't make the porch look neat, with these old stones cluttering up the railing," Ella complained.

"I'll put them upstairs in my room," Eli offered. "Aden has his rock collection upstairs in his room."

"No," Ella said sternly. Then turning to Mother, she pleaded, "Don't let him take these stones upstairs. It's bad enough having to put up with Aden's collection up there."

"If you don't want them upstairs, then you'll have to leave them where they are," Mother said in a tone of voice that settled the matter. Turning to Eli, she said, "Go back to the sandbox and play with Daniel. Ella won't throw your stones away."

Assured by his mother's word, Eli ran back to his playing. Ella swept the porch in silence and then went into the kitchen again. "It sure is warm in here," she said. "I'm going to see if I can find that screen we sometimes use in the north window."

"That's a good idea," said Mother. "I think you'll find it in the storage closet upstairs."

Ella went upstairs and soon returned with the screen. "I found it," she announced. "And look what else I found." She held up

an old glass jar containing a greenish brown liquid.

"What's that?" asked Mother, stepping closer for a better look.

"Aden's tadpoles," answered Ella. "Remember the day before yesterday when he went down to the swamp in the woods and brought them back? I suppose he knew we wouldn't let him keep them in his room, so he hid them in the storeroom."

"He can't keep them in the dark storeroom," said Mother. "I'll talk to him about it later."

"I'm going to throw these things out," said Ella. "That will teach him not to hide smelly old cans like this in the storage room."

"No, Ella, you won't throw them out," Mother said. "They mean a lot to Aden, so we won't throw them away without talking to him first. Put them on the porch for now."

"On the porch with that rock collection," Ella muttered to herself. "Won't our porch look nice with all that junk on it."

When Ella stepped outside, she saw something on the porch that dismayed her even more. Sand had been scattered all over the porch — the same porch she had

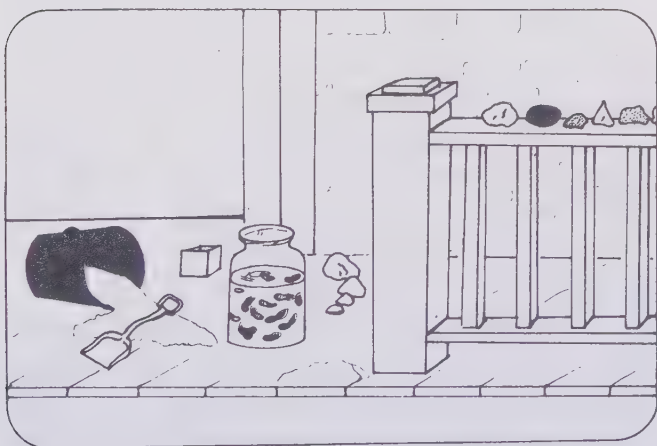
just finished sweeping ten minutes ago!
"Now just who did this?" she gasped.

Ella didn't have to ask herself twice. Just then Daniel, who was a little over a year old, came toddling toward the porch from the sandbox. He had a tin can filled with sand clutched tightly in his arm.

"No, no, Daniel," scolded Ella. "Take it back to the sandbox."

Daniel stopped and grinned at Ella, pointing his free hand toward the porch. He was "telling" Ella something in his usual language — the language no one understood.

"Take it back," Ella said again, more earnestly this time. She took him by the



hand and wanted to lead him back to the sandbox, but Daniel protested loudly. Ella picked him up and carried him. It was a while before she could leave him, because he wanted to be held.

At last Ella slipped away, but by the time she had swept the sand from the porch, Daniel was crying again. "See what Daniel wants," Mother called out to her. "Take time to play with him for a little while. His teeth are bothering him again."

On any other day Ella would have been delighted to be dismissed from helping in the kitchen, but today was different. There were so many interesting things going on in the house, and she was supposed to be contented with playing in the sandbox with Eli and Daniel, the two babies in the family.

After a few unsuccessful attempts to slip away from Daniel, Ella picked him up and carried him into the house. "Mother, I think Daniel has a fever again," she said.

The minute Daniel saw Mother, he cried for her.

"You shouldn't have brought him in here," Mother said. But she dried her hands and took Daniel from Ella. She carried him into the bedroom, changed his diaper, and

gave him a small pink fever pill. She talked soothingly to him all the while, and by the time she brought him back, he was in a much better mood.

"You'll have to take him outside and play with him," Mother said. Daniel seemed to understand and eagerly stretched his fat little arms toward Ella.

"But I want to help in here," Ella said, hanging her head.

"The best way you can help right now is taking care of Daniel," Mother said. "After an hour or so, he'll probably take a nap. You can help us then."

"By that time Lydia will have all the interesting things done," Ella grumbled to herself as she went outside with Daniel. She carried him to the swing under the tree and gave him rides by sitting on the swing and holding him on her lap.

After a few minutes Ella went over to the window. "Mother, couldn't Aden come in and take care of Daniel?" she called.

"Dad needs Aden this forenoon," Mother said. "He has to help in the grain bins and run errands for Dad. I wish you could help in here, but someone has to take care of Daniel. Usually you enjoy playing with your little brothers."

II. The Lost Brother

Ella walked slowly back to the swing, feeling disappointed and sorry for herself. "Little brothers," she scoffed. "Little bothers is a better name for them." She sat down and thought about all the bother and extra work her little brothers caused. She thought of her friend, Elizabeth, who didn't have any younger brothers or sisters.

"She's lucky," Ella thought. "Just think how nice and clean our house would stay if there were no little boys to scatter the toys and track in mud and dirt."

"Bothersome brothers." Ella repeated the phrase again. She liked the sound of it. "It almost sounds like the title of a book," she said, laughing to herself. "Maybe someday I'll write a book called BOTHERSOME BROTHERS. Wouldn't I have a lot to write about! I'd write about the stones on the porch railing, the jar of tadpoles hidden in the upstairs closet, the sand scattered on the clean porch floor, plus all the work of taking care of little brothers."

Daniel looked up at Ella with his big, blue eyes. They were not sparkling with

fun like they usually were. They looked watery and dulled by fever. Ella's heart softened a little. "You can't help it that you are a bother, can you?" she said, giving him a quick little hug. "But Eli and Aden can help it. They wouldn't have to collect and keep every little bit of junk they find."

Ella heard the "Whir-r-r-r!" of the egg beater and knew that Lydia was making whipped cream for pudding. All the old resentment returned. For the next half hour Ella sat there thinking about all the bother her brothers made. She felt she had more than enough to write a whole book on the subject.

Eli interrupted her thoughts by bringing a nursing bottle half full of honey water. "Mom said you are supposed to give this to Daniel, and he'll probably go to sleep."

Ella took the bottle. "Go away so Daniel will go to sleep," she ordered, when she saw that Eli wanted to settle down on the grass beside the swing.

Eli obeyed. He jumped up and trotted around the corner of the house in his usual happy-go-lucky fashion.

Daniel went to sleep and Ella carried him carefully into the house. She sighed with

relief when she had him in the crib. He was still sleeping soundly.

Ella found there was still some interesting work waiting for her in the kitchen. She took the dish of jello from the ice box and carefully cut it in squares. Then she opened a jar of peaches, a jar of pears, and a can of pineapples and made fruit salad.

Before long Mother sent word to the barn that dinner was ready. Then she and the girls hustled around, doing last-minute things like filling the tumblers with fresh water and carrying the steaming food to the table. Mother tried to time her work so that dinner was ready and the food still hot when the men came in.

Dad came in to see if Mom needed any help before he invited the men in.

"Where's Eli?" asked Mom.

"Eli?" Dad glanced around the kitchen as if he expected to see him around somewhere. "I don't think I've seen Eli all forenoon."

Mother's eyes widened in alarm. "It's been a good while since I've seen him."

"The last time I saw him was when he brought the honey water out for Daniel," said Ella, feeling guilty about how she had ordered him to leave the yard.

Lydia and Ella ran out the back door and made a round through the back yard. Ella ran around the front, where the men were waiting under the shade tree. Calling Aden aside, she asked, "Have you seen Eli lately?"

"Ah-h-h, not since the last time I took water to the field," he answered. "He wanted to go along, but he walked so slowly, I told him to go back."

Ella's heart seemed to freeze. "W-was he on the other side of the bridge when you sent him back?" she asked.

"Yes," Aden answered. "I looked back and saw him sitting on the bridge, looking down at the water."

Fear and alarm flooded Ella's whole being. What if Eli had fallen from the bridge into the water and drowned? She knew the water wasn't deep at this time of the year, but it still could have happened. Maybe he had even hit his head on the rocks when he fell.

Ella turned and ran back into the house. Dad came out of the bedroom and Mother was coming down from upstairs. They both shook their heads. They had not found the missing boy.

"Run out and look in the barn," Mother said. Lydia, Aden, and Ella all ran. Halfway to the barn Lydia decided to look in the hen-house instead. Maybe he was looking for eggs.

Ella cupped her hands over her mouth and called, "EEEEEE-LIIIII!" She strained her ears for an answer. There was no sound except that of the horses munching their hay and grain.

Dad came running to the barn. "Did you look in the water trough?" he asked.

Ella shook her head. IN THE WATER TROUGH! She squeezed her eyes shut and prayed, "Please, God, don't let us find him there." Her heart seemed to stand still as she watched Dad peer into the watery depth of the trough where the horses and cows got their water. After what seemed like a long moment, Dad turned away and went to check the smaller water tank in the milkhouse.

By this time the men who had been waiting on dinner had learned about the lost boy and were hunting for him, too. Ella remembered hearing stories of children who had been kidnapped. And she had once read about a little girl who had been lost on the mountain for five days. But the sharpest

thought of all was the thought of perhaps finding him in the creek — dead. "If only I wouldn't have ordered him away when I was putting Daniel to sleep," she thought. "He might have stayed right there in the yard."

"Here he is!" someone called from outside the barn. Ella ran as fast as she could, dreading what she might see when she got there. Was he still alive?

The minute she saw the group of men who had gathered around the buggy that was parked outside the barn, she knew everything was all right. They were talking and laughing as if they had just discovered a big joke.

Ella hurried over to see what was going on. There was Eli on one of the thrasher's buggies. He had fastened two twines to the front of the buggy. These "lines" were still in his hands, but he had slumped over and gone to sleep.

"Not much of a horseman, if you ask me," one of the men joked.

"Give him a few years and he'll do all right," answered Dad. Ella could hear that his voice hadn't quite returned to normal, even if he was laughing.

Dad gently picked up Eli without awakening him and started for the house. The other men followed. Everyone was laughing and talking, but for once, Ella was silent. In the few minutes when she thought she had lost a brother, she made a discovery. She had found out that brothers were worth all the bother they caused, and then some.

The Buggy that Buzzed

Ezra Lapp sat up straight on the hard, backless bench. He swung his legs back and forth, but very slowly, being careful to make no noise. He didn't want to attract the attention of his father, who was sitting beside him in the warm room. Ezra was in church, and even though he was tired and would have liked to get up and stretch, he knew he should sit still.

Ezra turned his head to the side of the room so he could see the clock on the shelf. It was a little past eleven. Church would be out before too much longer. With a sigh he settled down on his seat.

A baby cried restlessly from the kitchen where the women were seated. Behind him, back a few benches, Ezra heard the clear voice of a little child, asking for a drink. He heard the father whisper quickly, "Shh! Not so loud." Soon someone handed a glass of water back to the thirsty child.

Shifting his position again, Ezra looked at the minister standing in the open doorway between the two rooms packed with people. Beads of sweat stood out on his face as he preached to them in a rapid, high-pitched voice. Then his voice dropped and he spoke slowly and naturally like a farmer would speak to his neighbor on the road. Ezra wished he would tell some more stories from the Bible as he had earlier in the day. Ezra had sat spellbound as the minister told the story of the three brave men who were thrown into a large stove, made seven times hotter than before. But now the minister was talking about Geduld and Ezra wasn't even sure what it meant. He put his hand to his mouth to cover a yawn.

The clock ticked steadily on, and at last they were singing. After the song everyone would be dismissed. Ezra peeped at the

songbook held open between his father's fingers. There were only four verses to sing. Good.

When the singing had ended, the bishop announced at whose house church would be held in two weeks. Then he dismissed everyone.

Several younger boys were sitting on the bench in front of Ezra. He saw them look at their father questioningly. Their father nodded. That meant, "Yes, you may go." They slid eagerly off the bench and pushed their way toward the door. Following them outside, Ezra stopped at the edge of the porch, blinking his eyes in the bright July sunlight.

Someone pinched him lightly on the shoulder. "Hi, Ezra."

He swung around to face Benny, a good friend of his. "Oh, hello."

"Isn't it nice to be out here, with this breeze blowing?" asked Benny.

"Yes, it feels good to get some fresh air."

"Let's go lie under the shade tree out by the road until dinner is ready."

The two boys stretched out on the soft grass in the cool shade of the tree. "What'll

we do this afternoon?" Ezra asked. "It's such a nice day."

Benny thought for a moment. "Why don't we go for a hike? Back in Renno's woods."

"I'm in favor. It'll be nice back there this time of the year."

"There's Calvin Kauffman," Benny said, pointing toward the black-haired boy just coming out of the house. "Maybe he'd like to go along, too."

"Hey, Calvin," Ezra called. "Come here a minute."

"Here I am," Calvin said, coming over to them. "What do you want?"

"We're going on a hike this afternoon. Want to go along?"

"Where to?"

"Back to Renno's woods. It's only a couple of fields over there."

Calvin squatted on the grass beside them. He chewed thoughtfully on a blade of grass. "Sure, I'd like to. I've nothing else to do after lunch until my parents are ready to go home."

Their attention was drawn to a group of boys in front of the house. Amos Schrock was walking toward the barn. On top of his head he had stacked three hats. A bunch of

younger boys were laughing and pointing at him.

"What's he doing that for?" Ezra asked.

"You know why," Benny said. "Amos is a showoff. That's why. He's always acting smart."

"Probably thinks it's something big," Ezra said.

"Are we going to take him along on our hike? He's our age," said Benny.

"We probably should," said Ezra.

"Let's ask him," Calvin said. "He's not so bad, and he'll be peeved if we don't."

II. To Renno's Woods

As soon as they had eaten, the boys hurried from the house. Amos was with them, chatting constantly. "There's an old sugar camp on the other side of the woods," he said. "I know where it is. I was there once last summer and saw a great big snake."

"You probably screamed like a girl," Benny said.

"No, I didn't," Amos retorted. "The snake looked at me with its green eyes and stuck out a big red forked tongue. But I

wasn't scared one bit. I killed it with a stick."

"Ha," said Ezra. "I can't see anything so brave about that. It was likely nothing but a garter snake that had never hurt anything bigger than a toad."

Amos picked up a stick and whacked it on the ground. "It was not a garter snake," he said. "It was brown with black spots."

"Well, it wasn't poisonous, because there aren't any poisonous snakes around here."

"Maybe it escaped from a zoo," Amos said.

"Maybe it didn't either."

They were nearing the woods now. The boys walked in silence for a few minutes.

"Say," Amos said suddenly. "Did I show you boys my watch?" He pulled out a shining new pocket watch. It was fastened to his



suspenders with a nickel-plated chain. The others crowded it around to see it.

"It's a jewel watch," Amos told them proudly. "It's no tin five-dollar thing. Got seventeen jewels. It's guaranteed, and keeps perfect time."

It was a fine watch. There was no getting around that. But none of the other boys felt like admiring it. Amos had bragged on it enough already.

"You've got a good watch, all right," Ezra said. "But what happens if you drop it?"

"It would break," Amos said. "That's why no one should have a watch like this unless he's grown-up enough to take care of it."

Ezra bit his lip to keep from answering. Amos sure had a good opinion of himself.

At the edge of the woods, the boys found an old open buggy that had been junked there. The upholstery on the seat and back was stiff and brittle from having been out in the weather. The seat was torn in half a dozen places. The dashboard was broken off.

The boys walked up closer to look at it. "Here's a good buggy for Amos," laughed Calvin teasingly. "He has the best of everything anyway."

"Of course, it would need a few repairs," Benny said, kicking the side of the buggy.

"Shh-h-h!" said Ezra, putting his finger to his lips. "What's that noise?"

The boys listened. A loud buzzing sound came from the torn buggy seat. Amos was the closest. He took a hurried step backwards.

Standing perfectly still, the boys listened, but the buzzing noise had stopped.

"Maybe it's a nest of rattlesnakes," suggested Ezra. "Go up and see, Amos. You're the world-famous snake killer."

But Amos did not move. Calvin went up to the buggy and kicked it again. Once more the buzzing started. A large bumblebee crawled out of one of the holes in the torn seat. It was followed by a second and a third.

"Bumblebees!" someone shouted. "Let's get out of here." The boys almost tripped over each other in their wild scramble to get away. At a safe distance they stopped, puffing and laughing.

"You would think it was a nest of bears instead of bees," Ezra laughed.

"Well, I'm not scared a bit," Amos said loudly.

"You kept up with the rest of us in running," said Calvin.

"But I'm not scared. I'm not afraid to go back there right now and kill every one of those bumblebees."

"You'll get stung, too," Benny warned.

"Ho, ho," Amos boasted. "I'll take a stick and beat that sea so hard that the bees will think a tornado has come."

"I don't think we should destroy their nest," Benny said. "My father says we shouldn't bother a bumblebee nest. He says they are a farmer's friends."

Amos was hunting for a stick. "I can't see anything so good about them," he said. "They sting if they get half a chance."

"But they do a lot of good," Ezra said, coming to Benny's defense. "When they visit the flowers to get honey, they spread pollen from one flower to the next."

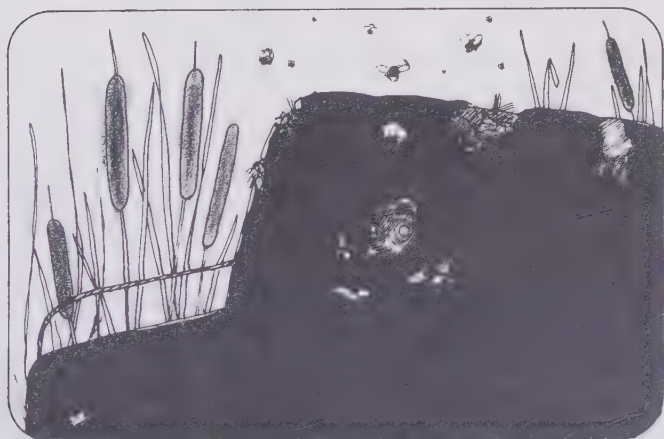
"I don't care," Amos said. He had found the stick he was looking for. "Just come along and watch me make short work of that nest. I'm not afraid of them." He waved the stick bravely in front of himself as he walked toward the buggy.

"He's just trying to show off again," Benny said when Amos was out of hearing

distance. "He deserves to get stung, good and hard."

The three boys stood watching as Amos neared the nest. He was moving cautiously, holding his stick in readiness and watching the hole in the leather seat.

Amos paused and glanced over his shoulder to make sure the other boys were watching. Then he brought the stick down on the seat with a loud whack. Again and again he struck. He had to keep on beating to make sure he had killed them all. But it wasn't as easy as he had thought it would be. The buggy seat was springy and full of



packing. Suddenly the buzzing bumblebees were crawling all over. Amos beat with short, rapid strokes. The lower end of his stick caught on his watch chain. The force of his blow jerked his watch from his pocket and broke the chain. The watch clanged against the side of the buggy.

Dropping his stick, Amos grabbed for his watch, but missed. With a dull thud the watch landed on the ground. Amos had it in a second and jumped to his feet. There was a sharp sting on the back of his neck. The air was suddenly full of buzzing, zooming bumblebees. There were so many of them that Amos couldn't possibly slap them all off. Screaming and waving, Amos raced toward the other boys. When they saw him coming, they ran, too. Behind Amos they could see several buzzing black dots.

After a few hundred feet, the bumblebees gave up the chase and went back to their home. The other boys stopped running and Amos came panting up to them. Already his one eye was nearly swollen shut.

"How often did you get stung?" Ezra asked worriedly.

"I don't know," Amos answered. Miserably he shook his head.

"Did you find your watch again?"

"Yes." Then remembering how the watch had clanged against the side of the buggy, Amos held it to his ear and listened. He shook it a little and listened again. The watch was silent, except for a faint little rattle that shouldn't have been there.

Amos, too, seemed strangely silent. Then the boys knew why. He wasn't bragging.



Surprises

Dad Troyer was hitching old blind George to the buggy, while Mom wrapped her thick shawl around herself and pulled her bonnet forward on her head.

"It will be a cold ride to town," said Mom. "Don't you think you'd better pull on another coat, Ben?"

"I'm warm enough," replied Dad. "If I get cold, I can jump off and run alongside."

Joni and Sammy came walking from the house. "What are we supposed to do this afternoon while you're gone, Dad?" asked Joni.

"You can play to your hearts' content," Dad smiled. "Of course, don't forget to start choring early. We should be home before dark." He looked at the sky. "I hope it doesn't snow before we get back."

It was the last week of the year. Christmas was just past, and there would be no school till after New Year's. Dad and Mom wanted to go to town to do some shopping.

"If Millie needs any help, you can help her," Mom suggested. "She is taking care of the children."

"Get up, George," called out Dad, as he stepped into the buggy and sat down. He pulled the buffalo robe lightly around himself and tucked the ends behind his back. The blind horse started his slow trot, and the buggy rolled out the lane.

Joni turned to Sammy. "What are we going to play?" he asked.

"I wish it would snow, then we could take sled rides," Sammy said.

"You shouldn't say that," said Joni. "Dad doesn't want it to snow till they get home."

And here you say you wish it would snow."

"Wishing won't make it snow anyhow," laughed Sammy. "What I really wish is that it would have snowed last night, but it didn't. And we can't skate on the ice either. The pond isn't frozen hard enough."

"Say, I have an idea," Joni said quickly. "Let's go do all the chores we can now. It will be more fun playing then. And maybe we can think of a good game while we're working. We can get the hay down from the mow, clean the manure out of the cow stables, and bed the cows with straw."

"Okay. Let's do that. Then we can play longer."

The boys raced each other to the barn. Sammy won, but he banged against the barn door so hard that it knocked the breath out of him for a moment.

Working swiftly, the two boys forked the sweet-smelling hay down the chute to the cow stable below. They loaded the manure into the wheelbarrow and pushed it outside the barn, where they dumped it on the pile. Then they carried armloads of prickly straw from the straw stack and spread it beneath the cows.

Within a half hour they were finished. "We have to wait till evening to milk, though," said Sammy. "What can we do now?"

"We haven't thought of any game to play, have we?" Joni said, closing the barn door and following Sammy toward the house. "I wonder where the twins are."

"Probably in the house with Millie," Sammy paused beside the huge woodpile that Dad and Uncle Andy had cut with the buzz saw the week before.

"If it snows, this wood will get covered," Joni remarked. "I heard Dad say he ought to stay home and put this wood into the woodshed."

Sammy looked at the pile of wood and then at the woodshed. "Why don't we give Dad and Mom a surprise?"

"But how can we?" asked Joni. "Are we big enough?"

"Of course," said Sammy, sounding sure of himself. "We can use the wheelbarrow, and the twins can help us with their wagon. Come on, let's surprise Mom and Dad."

Sammy started running for the barn to get the wheelbarrow. He was soon back and together the two boys loaded the wood.



Then Sammy grabbed the handles and pushed toward the woodshed. The wood was heavier than he had thought, and in a minute the wheelbarrow had turned over, spilling all the wood.

"See," said Joni.

"We have to take smaller loads," Sammy began at once to pick up the wood. "We'll take turns pushing it in, and the other one can be piling it up inside."

This time the load was lighter and Sammy reached the woodshed without any trouble.

"See," he said.

"We'll work hard and surprise Dad and Mom, but the twins should help us." Joni started for the house to call them, while Sammy went back for another load of wood.

As Joni opened the door, he heard dishes rattling in the kitchen. Elmer came running and stood in front of him, blocking the hall.

"You and Ruth get your wagon and come help us haul wood," commanded Joni.

"Who said so?" asked Elmer.

"I said so!" answered Joni. "Isn't that enough?"

"But Dad didn't say so, did he?"

"Of course not. He doesn't know we're doing it. It's to be a surprise."

"Well, why didn't you say so then?" asked Elmer. "We like surprises, don't we, Ruth?"

Ruth came out and stood beside her twin brother. She held a large spoon in her hand. "Who are you making a surprise for, Joni?" she asked.

"For Dad and Mom, and you have to come out and help us. "

"We can't right now, but pretty soon we can come," Ruth explained with an air of mystery. "We have to help Millie right now, don't we, Millie?"

Millie replied from the kitchen, "That's all right. You can go help the boys if you want to. I'll call you when I need you again."

The twins were soon busy helping with the wood. Back and forth they went, hauling the wood with their wagon. The ground

was frozen enough so that the wagon pulled easily.

"I can't keep up with you if you bring it in that fast," called out Joni. He was piling the wood in nice straight rows inside the woodshed.

"I'll help you awhile," offered Elmer. "Ruth can pull the wagon by herself."

The pile of wood was very large, and the children were soon tired. But when they thought of the surprise it would be for Dad and Mom, they kept on working as fast as they could.

Before long Millie called from the house, "Elmer, can you come help me a little while?"

"Oh, no," complained Sammy.

But Elmer was already running toward the house. "I'll come back as soon as I can," he promised.

Sammy and Joni both grumbled because Elmer had quit, but they kept on working as hard as ever. A few minutes later Joni was loading the wheelbarrow at the woodpile when Elmer came up behind him and said, "I can't find the ax."

"What do you want with the ax?" Joni asked impatiently.

"It's a secret. Tell me where it is."

"I don't know, Elmer. Why don't you just come and help us?"

"But I have to have the ax." Elmer was desperate.

"Oh, yes, now I know. Floyd Anderson borrowed it," Joni remembered.

Elmer's face fell. "Now what are we going to do?"

"Tell me what you want it for."

Elmer shook his head. "No, it's supposed to be a surprise."

"The ax isn't at home."

"Maybe I can use the hatchet." With these words, Elmer headed for the toolshed. When Joni looked around again, he saw Elmer ducking behind the maple trees on his way toward the barn. He carried the hatchet in one hand, and a gunny bag in the other.



II. An Evening of Surprises

"I'm getting tired," exclaimed Sammy, sighing. He lifted two big pieces of wood into place along the wall. "How much more is there outside?"

"If Elmer comes back, we can finish in half an hour," predicted Joni. He looked at the round disc that was the sun shining through the thick clouds. "It's about time to get done, too. We ought to start milking soon. If only that lazy Elmer would come help."

Ruth pulled the wagon up to the woodshed door, then straightened her back and rubbed her sore hands. "He'll come back soon," she said. "And you better quit saying he's lazy or...or..."

"Or what?" laughed Sammy.

"Or you won't get any of our surprise," Ruth turned her mouth into a pout.

Sammy looked at Joni and Joni looked at Sammy. Both of them grinned. Whatever the twins were helping Millie make, it must be something for supper.

Joni licked his lips. "I hope it's good," he said.

"It will be," Ruth assured him. "Just you wait."

Sammy grabbed hold of the wheelbarrow handles to go back for another load. "What if it's dark when they come home, and they won't even see our surprise," Sammy worried.

"You can tell them, can't you?" asked Ruth.

"But it would be more fun if they see it themselves."

Just then Elmer came hurrying out the door, whistling loudly.

"Good, here comes Elmer." Joni and Sammy began piling wood with fresh speed.

The four children worked hard. The woodshed grew fuller and fuller until there was hardly any room left. The woodpile outside dwindled until there was not one piece of wood left.

"Let's go milk the cows now," said Joni, stretching his tired arms. "That was a big job, but it was fun, wasn't it?"

"It really was," agreed Sammy. "But the most fun hasn't happened yet. I can't wait to see what Dad and Mom will say."

"But do you know what?" Joni frowned. "If we're in the barn we won't even hear the buggy come in. How are we going to know when they come home?"

"I'll watch! I'll watch!" Elmer jumped up and down.

"All right, you tell us when you see them coming. "

Ruth went to the house to help Millie, and the two oldest Troyer boys started milking. Elmer climbed up on the milkhouse roof and watched for the first sign of old blind George's ears coming over the hill.

Darkness was falling over the land when Elmer at last came scrambling off the roof, and shouted, "Here they come! Here they come!" He banged on the barn door.

Joni and Sammy came right away. They stepped outside, and with Elmer walked over to the lane to wait for their parents.

"C'mon George, you'll have oats for supper," Dad encouraged the tired horse as he walked slowly in the lane.

Dad pulled the horse to a stop beside the three waiting boys. "Whoa. Looks like somebody's glad to see us come home. Are you done choring?"

"Just about," answered Joni. "Mooney's not milked yet. "

"That's a nice surprise," said Mom, "to come home and the chores almost done. And umm, I smell supper. Millie must be making supper. "

"Our children are growing up," said Dad in a pleased voice as he began to unhitch George.

Mother started for the house, carrying a bag of groceries. "I'll carry something, too," offered Elmer. He ran along behind Mom, keeping his eyes on the place where the woodpile had been. Mom walked right on past and did not even notice anything different.

Dad led the horse to the barn and Joni and Sammy followed. "Mom didn't see it," whispered Joni. "I hope Elmer keeps his mouth shut, and doesn't tell her."

"Dad will see it when he passes," said Sammy.

Quickly the boys helped finish the chores, so they could walk with Dad to the house. It was darker now, and perhaps Dad would not notice either that the woodpile was gone.

When the chores were finished at last, Dad led the way from the barn to the buggy. "There's a box to take in to the house yet," he said. "A surprise for you, but you must wait till you get to the house to open it, so Millie and the twins can help."

"A surprise!" asked Joni and Sammy together.

"Yes. Mom and I figured you children deserved something. You all helped work well this year, with the corn husking and everything."

Dad felt under the buggy seat with his hand and pulled out a cardboard box. He tucked it under his arm and started for the house. The two boys stayed close behind, one on each side.

Dad sniffed the air and looked at the sky. Grey clouds were forming an overcast that was growing thicker and thicker. The half-moon was only a faint sliver of dancing light. "There's one thing I wish," said Dad. "I wish our wood was inside. It's going to snow tonight."

Dad turned to look at the woodpile, and then he stopped. He rubbed his eyes with his free hand, and peered long at where the woodpile had been. "What...what?" he stammered.

"It's all in the woodshed!" cried Sammy, clapping his hands.

"We worked all afternoon," put in Joni.

"But that was a big pile of wood. I can hardly believe it."

"We did it for a surprise, and Elmer and Ruth helped, too," Sammy began to explain.

"You must be a tired bunch of children." Dad stroked his beard as he walked to the woodshed and looked in.

"It wasn't so hard," said Joni. "It was fun."

Dad started for the house. "I must tell Mom what hard workers you are," he said. "We planned a surprise for you, and you planned a surprise for us."

A few snowflakes swirled around them as they entered the house. Mom smiled when she heard about the woodshed being full of wood. "This has been quite a day for surprises," she said. She looked at Dad. "Have you told them about our surprise?"



Dad held out the box. "Gather around, and open the box," he said. "It's for all of you."

Millie and Joni and Sammy and the twins crowded around the cardboard box.

"I hope it's books," said Joni, as Millie, being the oldest, opened the surprise box.

"You guessed it," cried Elmer.

The box did contain books. The first book Millie lifted out was a new book, Egermeier's Bible Story Book.

"We decided that Dad is going to read a Bible story to you every evening right after supper," explained Mom.

And then Dad spoke up. "The other books are not new ones. They didn't cost much money, but they will be nice for you to read these winter evenings. The only problem is, it will have to be by candlelight until the war's over."

One by one the books were taken out of the box. There was Bambi and Bambi's Children, Black Beauty, Heidi, Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates, and several others.

"That's the nicest surprise you ever got for us," said Joni, fingering one book after the other. He could hardly wait to read all the books.

"Put the books away now," said Mom. "Supper is ready. I believe Millie has a surprise for us, too." She smiled at her oldest daughter.

"Elmer and Ruth helped, too," explained Millie. "It's their surprise as much as mine."

"We helped with two surprises, didn't we, Ruth?" said Elmer.

The family seated themselves around the supper table. "First you will have to eat the soup, and then we will bring you the surprise," said Millie.

After the vegetable soup was finished, Millie motioned to Elmer and they went out to the back porch.

"I wonder what they've got back there," said Sammy.

"It can't be snow cream, for there wasn't any snow yet," said Joni.

Then Elmer and Millie came back, carrying the ice cream freezer between them.

"But how did you know how to make ice cream, all by yourself?" asked Dad.

"Maybe I didn't know how," admitted Millie bashfully. "Taste it and see."

Dad got up and opened the freezer. It was full of ice cream to the very brim.

With a large spoon he dipped the ice cream into each plate in turn.

"Ummm, delicious!" pronounced Joni. "But it tastes like honey."

"Of course, I had to use honey, because we don't have any sugar."

"But the recipe said to use sugar, didn't it?" asked Mom. "How did you know how much honey to use?"

"I didn't," said Millie, blushing from all the attention. "I put in so much honey, and then Elmer tasted it. He said it was sweet enough."

"It is, too. Just right," said Dad.

"But who got the ice? And who turned the freezer?" asked Mom.

"I got the ice," spoke up Elmer. "But the ax wasn't at home, so I had to chop it with the hatchet."

The family was quiet, as everyone busily ate the ice cream. The candles on the table fluttered as a hard blast of wind outside rattled the windows. A storm was starting, and the snow was beginning to fall thickly.

"Haven't we got a lot to be thankful for tonight!" asked Dad, his face serious. "A nice warm home, good food to eat, good

books to read." He paused, then went on. "And we have wood in the woodshed, where it will stay nice and dry, even though it snows and rains. What a lot of blessings!"

"Best of all, we have each other," put in Mom. "That's a great blessing, too. One big happy family, helping each other and thinking up surprises."

The family was silent again, in deep thought. At last Dad said, his voice more serious yet, "God has been very good to us. We want to always remember to thank him for these blessings. Especially when we think how many families are suffering from this war, how many little children have been driven from their homes or separated from each other. Those children are just as sweet and dear to their parents as you children are to us."

The wind whistled around the corners of the house. In the big wide world outside there was war and bombs and suffering. But indoors in the Troyer home, all was cozy and content. God had indeed been good to them.

Unit Five

YEARS AGO

Secret



Things

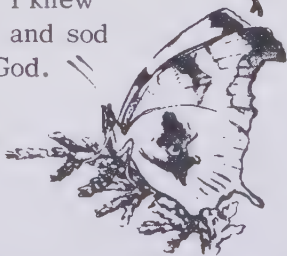
-By Solveig Paulson Russell

This was a day of secret things!
I saw a moth unfold its wings,
And in the hedge close to the ground
A tiny hidden nest I found.

I saw the morning steal the dew
And watched how shadows stretched and grew,
And when a bee flew close to me
His stubby feelers I could see.

I moved a board and there, below,
I saw where bugs in darkness grow;
And a closed bud I saw last night
Today had opened into light!

I saw these things and others, too,
And when I stopped to think, I knew
These secret things of earth and sod
Were just the handiwork of God.

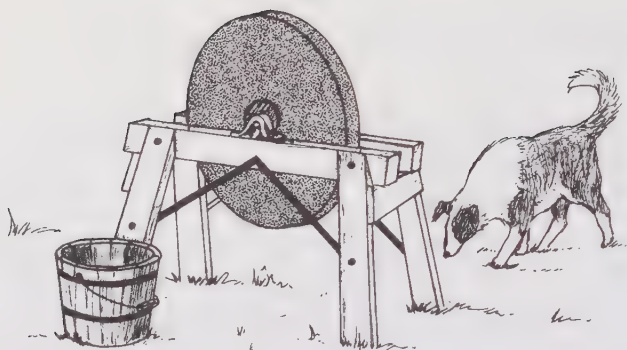


Who Broke the Bit?

Moses tucked his dark blue homespun shirt into his pants and stepped up close to the big grindstone. He took hold of its crank and kept the stone turning while his older brother, Lewis, stepped out of the way. Papa kept right on, skillfully sliding the scythe back and forth on the big stone to sharpen it.

Alvin, his younger brother, poured a little water on the stone. Moses liked to watch the little drops dancing on the turning wheel. He liked to hear the scythe change tunes when the stone got wet. The rough scratchy sound of the dry stone made the shivers go up and down his back. In fact, Moses liked everything about the shop. It was so interesting to watch Papa working there that he didn't mind his arms getting tired and his shirt tail coming out of his pants when he turned the grindstone.

Papa lifted the scythe and ran his thumb along its edge. "It's nearly finished," he said. "Let Alvin have a turn now." Moses continued to turn while Alvin took hold of the crank. Now it was Lewis' turn to pour



water on the grindstone. Moses sat down to watch the sparks fly when Papa pressed down hard on the scythe.

"Why are you sharpening the scythe, Papa?" he asked.

Papa glanced at Moses and smiled. "Harvest is coming," he answered. "Soon we will be cutting the ripened grain." Turning the scythe, he continued, "The Bible tells us, 'If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength.' That means that we have to work harder if we do not sharpen our tools. Grain cuts more easily with a sharp scythe and it does a nicer job, too."

Moses nodded his head as he thought about cutting grain with a dull scythe. Papa had a way of explaining things so that his boys could understand what he told them.

Soon Papa ran his thumb along the edge of the scythe again. "That's enough," he announced. "Will you hand me the whetstone, please, Moses."

Moses jumped up and gave it to Papa. He liked to hear Papa make the whetstone "talk" when he gave the scythe the final sharpening. Pretty soon Papa handed the whetstone back. "Put it in its place. This scythe is sharp enough to cut the toughest oats."

Moses knew that Papa was very particular. He had a place for everything and kept everything in its place. The boys were not allowed in the shop unless Papa was in it. "Some of my tools are sharp and dangerous," Papa explained. "You might get hurt." Moses put the whetstone back exactly where he had found it.

Papa took his big watch with Roman numerals out of his pocket in the front of his pants. Glancing at it, he said, "Come, boys, let's not be late for dinner. Mama and I want to go to town this afternoon."

"Oh, can we go along?" asked the three boys together.

"Not this time," Papa answered. "We'll be riding Pet and Frank. Mama would rather ride Pet than go in the wagon."

The three boys ran toward the house and burst into the kitchen. They took turns pumping water with the hand pump, cupping their hands and splashing the cold water into their faces. Then eyes closed, they groped for the homespun towel, dried their faces, and scooted onto the bench behind the table. Big sister Phoebe and Mama set the food on the table, everyone bowed his head, and Mama held Baby Mary's hands while Papa asked the blessing in German.

After a dinner of potatoes, corn, and tomatoes from the garden, Papa and Big Brother Rufus hurried outside to saddle the horses. Mama took her big black bonnet from the nail on the east kitchen wall. Putting it on, she tied it firmly under her chin and went outside.

Phoebe picked up Baby Mary and carried her to the porch to wave by-by to Mama and Papa. The boys ran out to the barnyard. Turning to them, Papa said, "Boys, bring the chickens some water and let the cows

into the west pasture so they can get water. Then you can play till Rufus calls you to put the cows into the stable at milking time." Then they rode out the lane, the horses' hoofs clip-clopping on the stones.

The boys brought the chickens some water. They raced up the road to put the cows into the west pasture. "It looks like it's going to rain," Moses shouted as they ran.

The cows were thirsty. They were waiting at the gap. (There were no gates then; a gap was an arrangement of rails which could easily be laid down or slid back to make an opening in the rail fence.) All that the boys had to do was to open the gaps in both fences and let the cows walk across the road into the west pasture. Then they put the rails back into place to close the gap.

Just then a loud clap of thunder made them jump. Huge drops of rain came pelt-ing down. Away ran the boys toward the barn. By the time they reached the shop, it was pouring. Quickly they dashed into the shop. Standing inside the door they watched the huge drops of rain dance and form puddles on the road.

"I hope Papa and Mama aren't out in this," Moses said. "I guess Papa won't mind if we just stand in the shop to get out of the rain."

"I don't think he'll care," Lewis agreed. "Phoebe would scold us if we came into the house all soaked."

After a while Moses grew tired of watching the rain. He walked over to the work bench and looked at Papa's neat row of tools, each one in its special place. He was tempted to try pounding one of the square homemade nails into a board with the hammer. He crossed his hands behind his back. "I'll be glad when I'm old enough to help Papa in the shop," he thought.

After a while Lewis came over to look at the tools, too. "Hey, look!" he shouted. "Moses broke one of Papa's drill bits. Just wait till Papa sees that. You'll get the worst whipping you've had in your life!"



Moses put his hands deep into his pockets. He cleared his throat. He ran his fingers through his thick, black hair. "I did not break that bit," he declared.

"Yes, you did. You were over here meddling with things," insisted Alvin and Lewis.

Moses brought his fist down on the workbench — one, two, three times. "I tell you, I did NOT break that bit," he shouted.

Just then Rufus called, "YOO-HOO, BOYS! Where are you?"

The three boys jumped. "Let's go out the back door so Rufus won't know we were in the shop," Lewis suggested.

It was still drizzling when they got outside. Puddles of water stood all around. The boys splashed through them as they walked to the barn.

"I was going to cut some oats, but it's too wet now," Rufus said. "If you fellows help me bag up some wheat, I'll help you play hide-and-seek till it's time to get the cows in."

Bagging wheat was fun, and playing hide-and-seek with Rufus was even more fun. Shouts of laughter rang throughout the huge barn.

II. Miserable Days for Moses

Before the boys could believe it, Rufus pulled his big watch, just like Papa's from his pocket. "It's time to go after the cows, boys," he said.

The boys splashed in the water puddles as they trudged up the road to get the cows. No cows were in sight. "Here, Alvin, let's you and I sit here on this stump while Moses rounds up the cows," planned Lewis. "It's no use for all of us to get wet pants legs in the grass."

"That's not fair!" Moses protested. "I'll really get wet if I have to do it by myself."

"Who cares?" laughed Lewis. "Beginning now, you'd better do what we tell you to, or we'll tell Papa about the broken bit. Then you'll catch it."

Moses' chin quivered. He started to say something. His face got red. His brown eyes snapped. Then he turned and ran at a brisk trot to round up the cows.

Lewis and Alvin helped chase the cows into the barn and tied them. When Rufus told Lewis to give the cows grain, Lewis looked at Moses and said, "I'm tired. You go."

Moses shook his head. "Rufus told you to."

Lewis glanced about to see where Rufus was. "Go," he hissed. "Remember, you do as I say or I'll tell."

And that's the way things were for several days. When Lewis or Alvin were told to feed the calves, give the chickens water, gather the eggs, or run errands they looked at Moses and said, "You go and do it."

The Pennsylvania German name for a drill bit is borer. To get their "Mind, you do what we say or we'll tell" message across to Moses without letting Papa or Rufus know what they were talking about, Lewis and Alvin made up a code. Spelling "B-b-o-r-y" was the secret message that Moses dreaded to hear. Every day, if he did not obey immediately when his brothers told him to do something, they chanted, "Remember, B-b-o-r-y."

What Alvin and Lewis did not know was that Papa was watching them all along, wondering what was happening. The boys hoped that as long as the chores and errands were being done, Papa wouldn't care who did them. Papa talked to Mama about it after the children were in bed. "Do you

know what Alvin and Lewis are teasing Moses about?" he asked.

"No, I don't," replied Mama. "But every time I ask them to do something, they try to get him in on it, too."

"Yes, I've been observing and am just waiting for the right time to find out what they are up to. When we ask one of the boys to do something, we want him to carry out that task," Papa said. "We can't let them continue like this."

The next day while Papa and the boys were in the shop, he told Lewis and Alvin to go and put the cows into the west pasture. "Come on, Moses," beckoned Lewis.

Moses didn't move.

"Come on. Remember, B-b-o-r-y," threatened Lewis.

Moses glared at his brother and started to get up. Papa looked at his unhappy face. "I told Lewis and Alvin to go after the cows," he said. Then turning to the other two, he called, "Wait a minute, boys. What is this you have going on with a 'B-b-o-r-y'?"

Quickly, before Lewis or Alvin had a chance to say a word, Moses spoke up. "Papa, the day you and Mama went to town

and it rained, we ran into the shop to get out of the rain. I'm sorry we were disobedient about going into the shop when you were not here. Anyhow, the boys claim I broke one of your bits that day. But I didn't. Really, I didn't."

Papa looked down at Moses' unhappy face. He looked at Lewis and Alvin. They were expecting him to be upset about their being in the shop and breaking a bit.

Papa's calm expression puzzled the boys. At last he said, "Look here, boys. I broke that bit myself. Alvin and Lewis, I will not have you taking advantage of Moses and making him do your work. Do you understand that when Mama and I ask you to do something, we expect the one we asked to do it?"

Alvin and Lewis looked hard at the floor. "Y-yes," they admitted slowly.

"Then I suppose you know that you were not only disobedient to us, but unkind to your brother at the same time," Papa said.

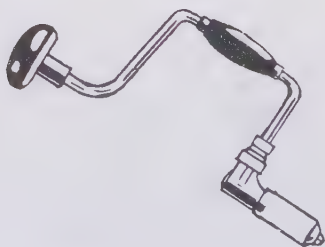
Again the two boys slowly nodded their heads.

Papa cleared his throat. "In Proverbs it says, 'Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein: and he that rolleth a stone, it shall re-

turn upon him.' That means when we try to make things hard for others, we are just making them hard for ourselves. You were hoping Moses would get a whipping he did not deserve. For doing so, both of you will have to take a whipping for being disobedient to your parents and unkind to your brother. And then I think you owe Moses an apology."

Several minutes later two sober boys walked up the road to put the cows into the west pasture. "Well, I guess that's the end of our taking it easy," Lewis said.

"I guess so," Alvin agreed. "But I guess we really did deserve the whipping we thought Moses would be getting."



A Servant

A servant's very nice to have
But nicer one to be,
To help the other folk along
Than have them wait on me.

You never need to be ashamed
To be a servant true;
For kindness shown to other folks
Will all come back to you.

The greatest servant ever known
Was God's beloved Son;
He willingly served others till
His earthly life was done.

He left the glory-Home above
A servant's life to live,
And die a servant's death as well,
His precious life to give.

Then how much more should we be glad
To serve and help and love,
For His dear sake, who stooped so low
To come from Heav'n above.

Rules or No Rules

"One! Two! Three! Four! Five! Six! Seven! Eight!" went the old clock one February morning a hundred years ago. It stood on a shelf in a cabin on the prairie, where David Williams lived.

David could hardly believe his ears, for there was not a sign of light between the shutters. Usually it was daylight at eight o'clock.

For the first time since his father and mother had started for town with Abbie, his younger sister, David was afraid. Then he remembered Peter. He must take care of his two-year-old brother.

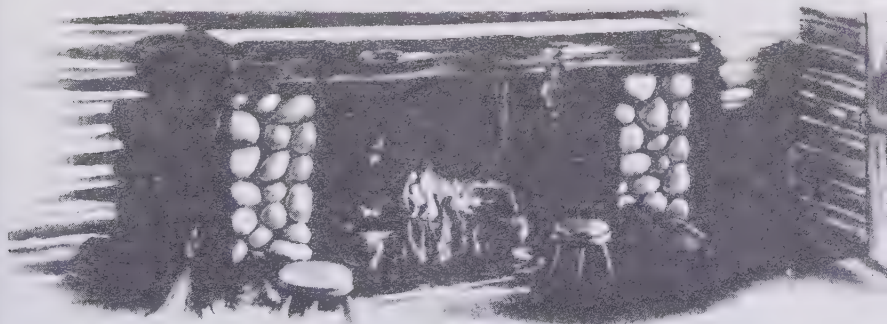
Jumping out of bed, David went over to the fireplace, where there were still some live coals. He put on wood and soon had warmth and enough light to dress by. In his fur-lined moccasins, woolen hose, buckskin breeches, and long elkskin frock, David felt all warm outside, but he felt cold inside because of the queer blackness.

Night at eight o'clock in the morning! If his mother were at home, she would be stirring the big kettle of samp that hung on

the crane. His father would be bringing in wood and pailsful of snow to be melted in the great copper kettle that stood by the fireplace. David would be doing his share of the work, too.

Suddenly there was a shrill sound which made David jump. Then he laughed, for it was Peter, wide-awake and crowing like a rooster, as David and Abbie had taught him to do.

David stood in the middle of the room, thinking over the things he must remember to do during the three days his parents would be gone. He must not go out of the cabin except for wood and water and snow. He must keep the bucket of drinking water and the snow kettle filled, and he must keep the woodbox piled high.



He must keep the coals in the fireplace alive, but not let them blaze so much that they would fly out into the room. He must stir the kettle of samp, turn the big slices of bear meat that were being smoked in the chimney, feed Peter regularly, and keep Toby, the dog chained.

Last of all, his father had said, "Remember, David, that no rules fit always. There are times when you have to forget rules and decide matters for yourself."

David looked at the soup on the hearth. Then he got the big wooden spoon and stirred the samp. He put some into a wooden bowl, sprinkled maple sugar on it, and gave it to Peter.

Peter sat up in the crib and fed himself from the bowl, crowing happily between the spoonfuls. After David had stirred the fire, he sat on the settle and ate his hot samp.

Suddenly the boy heard, "Wow! Wow!" He knew it was Toby barking, but the barks seemed to be coming from far off! How had the dog gotten loose? Maybe some Indians were taking him away, so that he wouldn't be there to give warning when they returned to rob his father's storehouse.

David's heart beat faster. "Don't you dare be afraid. Don't — you — dare — be —" he kept saying to himself. To keep up his courage, he took a pine splinter, kindled it at the fireplace, and lit the candle on the table.

"Wow! Wow!" barked Toby again. But this time the barks sounded weak, rather than far away.

"It's half past eight," said David to himself as he opened the shutters, "but there's no more light than before."

Cautiously the boy slid back the bolts on the door and lifted the stout bar. Instantly he was flung backwards, for the heavy door swung in as though someone had shoved it.

Before he could close the door, snow and wind came whistling in. Now he understood why it was dark so late in the day. A blizzard had snowed them in. It had snowed Toby in, too, in his kennel. That was why his barks sounded so weak.

More cautiously than before, David opened the door, bracing himself to prevent it blowing in. He pushed his way out, closed the door, and found Toby's chain. One end of it was hooked beside the cabin door, and the other was fastened to Toby's collar.

Holding onto the chain, the boy struggled through the snow, which came up to his waist. When finally he reached the kennel, he found a crust of snow frozen solid over the door. Toby had breathed into the snow, and the moisture had frozen, closing him in.

The dog barked joyfully as David tried to break the hard snow across the door of the kennel. But the boy couldn't crack a way in.

"I'll have to get the ax and cut a way through that frozen crust," thought David. He let go of the chain, started for the cabin door — and then suddenly he didn't know which way to go. For a thick, soft curtain of snow was coming down around him in a whirling cloud.

David planted his feet like rocks. He would not move until he knew the way. "Peter! Peter!" he called, "Sing 'Lucy Locket!' Sing loud!"

At first all he heard was his own heart beating. Then came Peter's shrill baby voice, singing the nursery rhyme he loved.

From Peter's singing, David knew where the cabin was. He plunged through the snow, tumbled inside the cabin door, and

reached for the ax. Toby's chain led him straight back to the kennel, and a few good blows on the crust of snow made it give way. Out crawled Toby — a stiff queer Toby, trying to wag his long brown and white tail.

With one hand on Toby's collar and the other on the chain, David struggled toward the door. The wind almost knocked him off his feet, but he managed to reach the cabin door. Peter was waving his spoon and singing.

II. To the Rescue

David dragged Toby to the far corner of the room so that the heat wouldn't thaw him out too fast. Then he put a quilt over Peter, for the door was still open. Getting it open and getting Toby inside was all he could manage. Now when he got behind the door and shoved, it would not budge, for snow was caked under it.

The water in the big kettle was hot. David poured some of it under the door in order to melt the snow and then pushed with all his strength. Not succeeding in shutting the door, he went to the back of the room

and ran against the door, shoving as hard as he could.

The heavy door moved, swung on its hinges, and slammed shut with a jar that rocked the cabin and knocked David down. Before he could get to his feet, there came to his ears a shrill cry from the outside. It sounded like an Indian calling for help.

"Chemi! Ic-da! Chemi — "

Convinced that it was an Indian in trouble, David prepared to find him and save him from freezing. He dipped some hot soup out of the kettle that always stood on the hearth, and ate it quickly. He needed strength to fight the storm.

"Chemi — Ic-da! Chemi — " The call was coming from the north of the cabin, near the white birch trees. David jumped to his feet.

Before leaving, he had to make the cabin safe for Peter and Toby. He set the screen in front of the fire, put out the candle, and placed over Peter's crib the cage that would prevent him from getting out. Last of all he barred the door, for he knew he could not close it from the outside.

David put on his warmest clothing, tied his father's two fishing lines together and

coiled the cord around his arm. Calling good-by to Peter, he went up the steps back of the chimney and raised the trap door opening onto the roof. As he had hoped, the south wind had swept the nearly flat roof clear. David climbed out on the roof and closed the trap door.

Next he tied the line to a hook in the roof, used to hold the trap door open, and with the line coiled around his arm, slid from the cabin roof to the roof of the lean-to shed, and from there to the ground. The cord would guide him safely back to the cabin through the snow.

With everything ready, David again listened for the Indian's call. Soon it came, very faint against the storm. The boy started out in the direction from which the voice seemed to come.

Near the cabin the snow was deep, and the wind blew it ahead of him in a stinging cloud. After a minute or two David felt as though the wind was fairly carrying him along.

As David went, he kept calling, when he had breath. He knew the Indian word Haoh, which meant the same as "Hello." So he cried, "Haoh, friend!" into the strange, dark world.

"Chemi — Ic-da!" came the answering call.

Then David's heart beat fast with relief, for the voice sounded like a boy's, and it was nearer now, and stronger.

"Haoh, friend!" he yelled in return, plunging ahead in his eagerness to find the lost boy.

"Chemi — Chemi — Ic-da — "

"Haoh — friend!"

Back and forth the boys called, until David had hardly any voice left and hardly any cord, either. A few minutes later he reached out and caught a hand stretched toward him. David put the Indian boy's hand on the cord, and said, "Come on."

It was harder, fighting against the wind. Once David fell into the deep snow, but the Indian boy pulled him up, and they struggled on together.

At last when David felt he couldn't fight another inch, his ear caught a familiar sound — the slow striking of the clock in the cabin. The wind brought the sound clearly through the air. Ten strokes! Ten o'clock in the morning and still dark!

"Tsigsam!" shouted the Indian boy. "House," he added, as if he feared that

David might not understand him.

All of a sudden they were there. Both of them had bumped into the wall of the cabin. They had followed the cord to the exact spot where David had slid from the roof.

He had no breath left to explain why they could not enter the door. But he managed to say, "Up!" and began to climb up on the roof.

Plop! Back into the snow he tumbled at the feet of the Indian boy. His stiff fingers had lost their hold. Oh, what would they do now?

Before David could think of a plan, the Indian was stooping, his hands on his knees. David understood. Quickly he climbed on the boy's shoulders, clutched the edge of the lean-to roof with his fingers, and pulled himself up.

As soon as David was on the roof, he reached his arms down, braced himself, and pulled the Indian up.

It took the boys a few minutes to get their breath. Then David led the way to the trap door, lifted it, and motioned the Indian boy to go down into the cabin. David followed him an instant later and found the half-frozen and exhausted lad lying on the floor.

At once David began rubbing the Indian's hands and face. Then he brought a wooden mug full of hot bear-meat soup, which the boy drank in great gulps. David helped take off his long leggings, made of leather with fur inside, that went round and round his legs from moccasin to knee. Then off came the moccasins, and David rubbed his slim brown legs and feet to help them get warm.

A little later, with his feet in a pair of David's moccasins, the Indian boy sat on a stool by the fire and drank more soup and ate hot samp. Then, warm and drowsy, he lay down on a blanket near the hearth and went to sleep.

After David gave Peter some playthings, he stretched out on the settle for a little rest. All at once the boy smiled to himself. He had just remembered his father's advice. "No rules fit always. There are times when you have to forget rules and decide matters for yourself."

The Friendly Visit

Mr. Dawson shaded his eyes with his hand and took a long look down the river before seating himself with the others by the fireplace, but there was no sign of a sail. The dinner consisted of stewed rabbit, with wild strawberries picked by Betsy and arranged on pieces of birch bark.

"A lean meal, I call it, with no bread," Mrs. Dawson said. "I'll be glad to see my barrel of flour."

"You'd better be glad we learned to snare rabbits," returned her husband. "I'm almost out of gun powder."

"We ought to eat more fish," said Oliver, who was always looking for a chance to go fishing.

As soon as Oliver and his father had gone to work, Betsy took the kettle and went down across the meadow to the river for water. It was quite a distance, but Oliver had cut a path through the long grass, and she liked an excuse to get down there. Now that she and Oliver were going barefooted to save their shoes for the Sabbath, she could walk

right into the water.

She had no sooner stooped to fill the kettle than she saw something which made her straighten up again and wave her arms frantically to attract the attention of her family. Her mother was behind the hut, but her father happened to glance back toward the river as he took up his ax.

"What ails your sister?" he asked.

Oliver turned to look. "Probably she saw a snake," answered the boy.

"She seems to be greatly excited. She is trying to attract our attention," continued Mr. Dawson. "Ah, I see what it is! Look, Oliver! A canoe full of Indians is coming down the river and heading this way."

Oliver saw it now, a long dugout canoe making straight for the shore where Betsy stood. "Hadn't we better --" he turned to ask his father, but Mr. Dawson was already running toward the river.

Throwing down his ax, Oliver followed. Indians were no longer much of a novelty. He and Betsy had been taken by their father to see the Indian village that lay to the east of the settlement. But these Indians were evidently strangers from the north.

Betsy came running to meet her father and grasped his arm excitedly. "Do you think they are coming to see us?" she exclaimed.

"It seems to be quite evident," answered her father. "Better go up to your mother."

"Oh, no, Father! Please let me stay and see them," she begged so earnestly that he said no more.

The canoe had already been beached and the Indians were stepping out upon the shore. There were three men and a boy. Their leader was a fine young chief. The hair on top of his head held a white eagle's feather.

When he saw Mr. Dawson, he came toward him with outstretched hand, saying, "Welcome. Welcome."

"Why," whispered Betsy in surprise. "He knows our language!"

But that was apparently the only word of English the chief knew, and Mr. Dawson and the Indians were forced to talk by signs. The chief waved his hands, and the other two Indians lifted a great bundle of skins from the canoe and laid them on the ground at his feet. The chief pointed to

them and then to the bag of *wampum in his belt, and last to Mr. Dawson.

Mr. Dawson showed great pleasure in the skins, for they were beautiful pelts of beaver and otter. Then he turned out his empty pockets and shook his head. Finally he pointed to the river and tried to pretend that a sailboat was coming up toward them. After that he touched the pelts and nodded his head, smiling.

"Will trade when ship comes. Will trade when ship comes," he repeated slowly, in the hope that one among them might understand.

The chief seemed to grasp his meaning, for he bade the men to take up the skins. Then he showed by signs that he wished to give some of them to the white chief. Mr. Dawson pointed in the direction of Mr. Hooker's land, and after he had offered to

*Wampum is a type of Indian money. They were small colorful shells which the Indians strung like beads and wore them in their belts or headbands. Strings of wampum were often given as gifts as a token of peace and good will.

show them the way, he and the three Indian men went off together.

II. A New Friend

The children, meanwhile, had been watching the Indians, completely fascinated. Betsy marveled to see how straight and still they stood. Oliver was interested chiefly in the boy, who seemed to be about his own age.

The Indian lad had been standing motionless beside the canoe while his father talked to Mr. Dawson. But now, when the men had taken out the skins, he bent over the end of the canoe and said something in his strange tongue. As he spoke, out jumped a small, dark brown animal which stood looking at them with its beady eyes.

It was a strange-looking creature, with a head like a seal and legs that looked too short for its long, heavy body. Oliver knew that it was an otter, for he had seen them in the streams back in England. But this otter, strangely enough, seemed to be tame. It sat down at its master's feet like a dog.

The Indian boy had evidently been told to stay with the canoe, for he did not offer to

go. Betsy pulled at Oliver's sleeve. "Let's go and talk to him," she whispered.

"All right," he agreed, "but I guess we'll have to talk with our hands."

To their surprise when they approached the boy, he suddenly said, "How do?"

"There, he can talk!" cried Betsy triumphantly, as though Oliver had claimed the boy was deaf and dumb.

"Go Manianuck, trade," explained the boy, pointing up the river.

"He means he's been to New Dorchester," said Oliver. Turning to the boy, he asked, "What's your name?"

The boy looked blank.

Then Betsy poked her forefinger into her chest and said very loudly, "Me, Betsy."

Oliver did the same thing, repeating it several times. "Me, Oliver."

Suddenly the Indian lad's eyes lighted up with understanding as he pointed at himself, saying, "Wannol Wannol!"



The children were delighted. "Well, Wanno, where did you get the otter?" Oliver asked, pointing at the little animal.

"Nikik," replied Wanno, giving the Indian name for his pet.

"How did you ever tame him?" Betsy asked, but Wanno didn't understand that question either.

"Fish!" he said. "See."

When he was sure they were watching, he picked up the otter and stepped into the canoe with it. Then leaning out over the end of it, he tossed the pet as far as he could out into the water.

"Oh," cried Betsy in terror. "He'll drown!"

Oliver, who knew that an otter was more at home in the water than on land, had no fear of that. But he wondered what Wanno meant by his action and kept his eyes fixed on the animal. The otter began at once to swim back, making little pounces now and then. When it reached the shore and climbed up on the bank, it had a good-sized salmon in its mouth.

"See?" laughed Wanno. "Fish!" And taking the salmon from his pet, he held it out to Oliver.

"Thank you," said Oliver. "A pet like that is a useful thing to have."

Although Wanno didn't understand this, he knew that the English boy was pleased, and he made the otter catch more fish for him. Then he let Oliver examine his bow and his buckskin quiver, full of arrows.

"Show me how to hold it," begged Oliver, making signs. Wanno taught him how to hold the bow and stretch the heavy string while he skillfully fitted an arrow.

"I wish I could make myself one like it," said Oliver. "It would be fine for hunting game, now that Father's powder-horn is almost empty."

Of course, the speech was not clear to Wanno, who then showed the children his own special mark on the bow. It was the head of an otter that he had crudely carved. After that he pointed up the river, then to Oliver, and last to the bow and arrows. Oliver could not understand these signs, but Betsy finally said, "He wants you to go to see him and learn how to make a bow."

So Oliver smiled and nodded his head, while Wanno hung the quiver over his shoulder. By this time the Indians and Mr. Dawson were returning across the meadow.

"Oh, dear, you'll have to go now!" cried Betsy.

Wanno had seen them, too, but he said nothing. He took a tiny string of wampum from his belt and held it out to Oliver.

"Si-ut. Take," he said.

"For me?" stammered Oliver. It was pure white wampum, smoothly polished. "You mustn't give me all that."

But Wanno dropped the wampum into his hand and stepped back, waving it proudly away when the English boy tried to return it. Then picking up the otter and holding it under his arm, he stood motionless by the canoe as his father approached.

Oliver turned to Betsy. "What can I give him? Tell me quickly! I must give him something."

He searched hurriedly in his pockets, where his fingers touched a silver sixpence that he had earned running errands in Old Newton. He brought it out on the palm of his hand and looked at it doubtfully. There wasn't much use for money in the wilderness, but he still hated to part with it, because it was all that he had.

Then suddenly he held it out to his new friend. "Please take this," he said.

Wanno looked pleased. "Mon-nee!" he exclaimed, and popped it into his mouth.

"O-oh!" cried Betsy, "he thinks it's something to eat!" But Oliver saw that he had laid it against one cheek for safe-keeping.

The boys didn't try to talk any more. Oliver stood beside his father while the Indians pushed off the canoe and stepped in. As they were leaving, the chief pointed up the river and then at the skins.

"I'll come as soon as our goods arrive," shouted Mr. Dawson.

He shouted it the second time before his wife, who had joined them, reminded him that the Indians couldn't understand. "I declare, you seem more excited than the children, Matthew," she said teasingly.

"I guess I am," he laughed, wiping the moisture from his hot face. "I feel sure that there is much profit to be made from fur-trading in this valley, and I have been eager to make a beginning. As soon as the ship arrives, I shall make a visit to the village of this chief. It is not far up the river."

"May Oliver and I go along?" begged Betsy.

"We'll see," said Mr. Dawson as he went down to the water's edge for a drink.

"Don't you hope Father will let us?" Betsy said to Oliver. "I like that boy."

"So do I," agreed her brother. "If only he would teach me how to make a bow and arrow, and to tame an otter."

"Oh, you wouldn't want one of those queer-looking beasts following you about, would you?" exclaimed his mother.

"Yes, I would," answered the boy. "Didn't you see all the fish he caught?" And then he pointed proudly at the salmon.

Mrs. Dawson was much surprised. "If an otter can do that, it might be worth its keep. Now if you will clean the fish for me, we will have them for supper. I was just wondering what we would eat."

—Marjorie Hayes

I Must Be

I must be a Christian child,
Gentle, patient, meek, and mild;
Must be honest, simple, true
In my words and actions too.
I must cheerfully obey,
Giving up my will and way;
Must not always thinking be
What is pleasantest to me;
But must try kind things to do
And make others happy too.
If a playmate treats me ill,
I must be forgiving still;
I must learn my lessons well,
Not my schoolmates to excel,
But because my heart's delight
Is in doing what is right.
And in all I do and say,
In my lessons and my play,
Must remember, God can view
All I think, and all I do.
Glad that I can know I try,
Glad that children such as I,
In our feeble ways and small,
Can serve Him who loves us all.

- Author Unknown

Home on Wheels

Richard and Ellen could not sleep that first night in the covered wagon. Mother and Baby Hugh were fast asleep; one could hear their deep, even breathing. To the two older children it was all so thrilling that they could not settle down. Through the canvas flaps of the wagon they could see the dark sky, set with stars. Some of the men were still talking by the campfire. Richard sighed and pulled the blanket closer. It was warm and comfortable in the wagon, but he would have liked to be outside. For a long time the children lay there drowsily, then somehow they fell asleep.

In the morning all kinds of noises awakened them — the sound of people rushing about getting ready to start, loud talk of the trail, and high spirits for the first exciting days of the journey. There was not much room to dress in the wagon, for there was so much of everything in it. Barrels of flour with eggs neatly packed in the middle, other food supplies, tools, clothing, bedding, even the clock that Moth-

er would not leave behind.

The first breakfast in the open air! The morning was crisp and cool, and the bacon sizzled cheerfully. Why did people talk of the hardships of the overland trail?

Those first days were not unpleasant, in spite of the bad roads. In the daytime there was a long trail of white-topped wagons with men and cows walking beside them. At night the wagons formed a corral, or closed circle.

One morning as they were breaking camp a small group of Indians rode up, but they seemed to be merely curious and ready to be friendly. Richard was standing by the wagon with Hugh in his arms.

The morning sun shone on the baby's red-gold curls, and one of the Indians gave a grunt. He got down from his horse, pointed to the baby, to himself, and then to the horse. He would trade the horse for the baby! Richard held Hugh tightly, shook his head, and stepped back into the shelter of the wagon. When the Indians rode away, Richard gave a sigh of relief.

There was often the excitement and danger of crossing rivers. The first river was deep and muddy, and there were only

two flatboats to ferry hundreds of wagons across. That meant a long wait. Some streams were shallow and could be forded by the wagons. The oxen were driven in, and soon the water came far up on the wheels. It gave one a queer feeling to sit in the wagon and watch the water swirling around one's feet. If only the stream did not get too deep.

The worst crossing was a deep river where there were no ferries. There the men had to take the wagon bodies off the wheels and fill the cracks with tar so that the flat bodies could be used as boats. All the goods and supplies had to be unpacked, taken across the river, and packed again.

On and on went the wagons, over roads so thick with dust that one could not see ahead. At night Richard and Ellen slept warmly in the wagon. Ellen was wrapped in a blue and white quilt that her grandmother had woven. Down in the corner of it were her grandmother's name and the date. The quilt was Ellen's favorite possession, and it was going all the way to California. It would make her feel more at home to see its familiar blue and white pattern on the bed in a new house.

On and on! Over roads even worse than before crawled the wagons — over mountains, through valleys, and over plains. On and on and on! They came to the grassy meadows before a long desert. Everyone had to "turn to" and make hay to feed the oxen during the days when there would be no grass.

Then the hardest part of the journey was begun. The sun was burning hot. The ground was dry and hard. Everyone who could walk beside the wagons did so to make the wagons lighter for the oxen. Ellen rode with Baby Hugh; Father and Mother and Richard walked. On and on! Now the sand was heavy and deep, so that the wheels of the wagon sank into it. Deserted wagons and dead oxen told the tale of difficulties met by other travelers.

"We'll never make it," said the men. "The loads must be made still lighter."

All the heavy things went first — cook-stoves and barrels of supplies. Still the wagon wheels moved heavily and the oxen strained at their yokes. The poor animals were growing tired. If they died, there would be no hope of getting out of the desert.

The day came when all the things that could be removed to make the wagon lighter were taken out. Richard and Ellen helped carry the things to the side of the trail and pile them up; all their dearest possessions, with Mother's clock ticking steadily on top of the pile.

"Oh, Father," said Ellen, "must I leave Grandmother's quilt? Please let me keep it."

"We'll have to leave it," said Father. "It's leave everything now, or die ourselves."

The blue quilt joined the pile at the side of the trail; so did Richard's gray blanket. The men made a sign, such as they had seen in other places, "Help yourself." Perhaps a lighter wagon would be able to use some of the things they had left.

"I hope someone will take my pretty blue quilt," Ellen said sadly.

"Most likely before the week is out an Indian baby will be wrapped in it," said Richard.

"Don't tease your sister, Richard," said Mother. "We have enough troubles without that."



They were near the edge of the desert now, and it was well, for the water barrels were almost empty. A different danger lay ahead, for in the distance were the snow-capped peaks of a great range of mountains. Ellen felt weak and tired. As she lay in her bed at night, an endless procession of dreary scenes kept going through her mind — burning hot days on the prairies; choking dust; sand, miles and miles of it; the kitchen clock and the blue quilt by

the side of the trail; Bright, their favorite ox, lying dead; heat and thirst; Baby Hugh crying pitifully for water; hunger. Now she was sure she knew all the hardships of the California trail.

Mountain travel was dangerous, but a welcome change. These mountains were worse than those that they had passed. There were times when wagons had to be unpacked and lowered over cliffs, or dragged up a steep, rocky wall. At other times they toiled up long hills almost too steep for the oxen, or went through deep, gloomy ravines. It was solemn and lonely in the mountains, and nights were cold. Everyone longed for the warm coverings they had left behind in the desert.

At last the road began to go downward. The grass was fresh and green and full of flowers. California was near! The travelers were at the end of the trail, and there was a pleasant, grassy valley and a good place to camp. That night there was cheery talk around the campfire. Richard and Ellen listened to a surprising conversation between two of the older men. One of them said solemnly, "God has blessed and favored us through this long journey."

"Indeed, yes," said the other. "We have not met with accident or disease and have traveled smoothly and quietly."

Richard and Ellen gave each other a wondering look. So the journey had been an easy one!

The story might end here with the making of new homes. For Ellen it ended later, when in another cabin she saw a blue and white quilt on a bed. Ellen lifted the corner of it and looked. There was the woven name: Ellen Adair.

Her grandmother's name! Ellen dropped the corner of the quilt without saying a word. The sign had said, "Help yourself." She had no right to the quilt now. That was just a part of life on the trail.

The Gold Dollar

"BOY WANTED." The large block letters of the sign in the store window caught the eye of a young boy as he walked along the sidewalk.

"Here's a place that wants a helper," said the boy eagerly. "But, oh, oh," he

added a minute later. "Isn't this Peters' General Store?"

Stepping off the curb, he looked at the red letters painted across the front of the store. "Just as I thought," he sighed. "I don't know if it is worth trying here or not. John Simons and Charley Hunt both worked for Mr. Peters, but didn't stay longer than a week. They say he's a little odd."

The boy pushed his nose against the plate glass window and peered inside. The store was well lighted with rows and rows of heavily filled shelves. "Must be doing good business," mused the boy. "The store looks so well stocked. Maybe I'll try it anyhow and see if I can get a job."

Mustering up his courage and expecting the worst, he opened the heavy front door. He jumped as the door jingled a string of bells hanging from the ceiling. But the noise summoned almost instantly a short, thin-faced man from behind a curtained doorway.

"Yes," said the man, looking over the rims of his spectacles at the nervous lad before him. "What can I do for you?"

"I....I...." stammered the boy, "I saw your sign in the window. Can you still use a boy?"

"The right boy," came the quick reply. The sober-faced storekeeper broke into a slight smile. "Have you good steady hands and don't drop things?"

"Yes, sir."

"And good quick steps, so you don't spend all day delivering one woman's grocery order?"

"Yes, sir." The boy shifted his weight from one foot to the other.

"If a woman gave you two dollars and her bill was \$1.68, how much change would you give her?"

The lad studied a bit, then spoke up, "Thirty-two cents, sir."

"Right," smiled the man. "What's your name?"

"Terry Mills."

"Okay, Terry, I'll tell you what I am going to do. You come in after school all next week and stock shelves and run errands. Then if you pass the test, you can be my boy."

"Oh, oh," thought Terry to himself. "A test. I wonder what kind of test that will be." But figuring he had nothing to lose by trying, he accepted the man's offer.

Mr. Peters had a peculiar way of trying out the boys before he hired them. There was a huge, long box in the store's attic, full of old nails and screws and rusty bits of hardware. When a new boy applied for a job, sooner or later the old gentleman would send him to the attic to sort out the contents of that long box. Mr. Peters judged the boy by how he managed the task. So far two boys, friends of Terry Mills, had started on the box, but had soon given up in disgust, reporting that there was nothing in the box worth saving.

On Monday afternoon the store door opened promptly at 3:30. In walked Terry Mills, his jacket slung over his left shoulder.

"Right on time," smiled the storekeeper, winding his pocket watch a half dozen turns. "You may begin your work by putting these cases of soup on the shelf next to the juices."

Terry nodded his head and went to work. That day he helped to stock the shelves and ran errands for Mr. Peters. The old man said nothing about his box in the attic.

But the second afternoon Terry was directed to the attic soon after arriving for

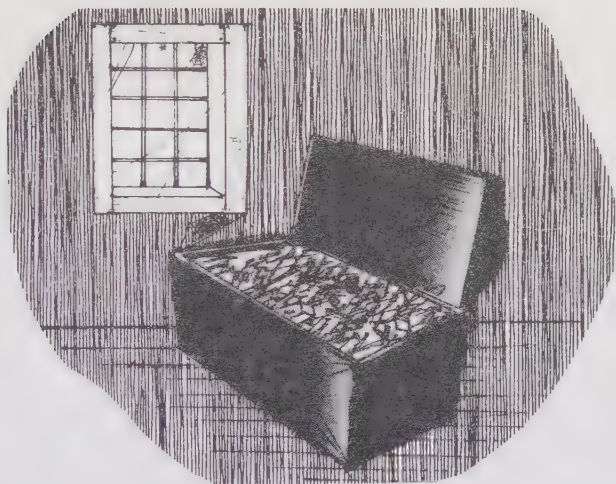
work. "There's a long box up there," the storekeeper instructed. "It's full of odds and ends that should have been sorted long ago."

Terry started up the attic stairs. He was surprised to find it so dark. A cobweb brushed his face. The dusty steps on the creaky wooden staircase groaned under his weight. "Say, is this spooky!" Terry said, as he glanced around the poorly-lighted attic. "Everything looks as if it had been here for a hundred years!"

Near the window where there was better light, he found the box. The rusty hinges creaked as he lifted the curved lid. "What a bunch of junk!" Terry breathed aloud. All that met his eyes were countless nails, screws, bolts, and wire.

"But if he wants them straightened up, that's what I'll do," decided Terry.

The hours that afternoon were not as exciting as the ones the day before had been, but Terry kept right on working until Mr. Peters called that it was quitting time. Neatly stacked on the floor around the box were piles of nails and bolts from the trunk.



"Finished?" asked the storekeeper as Terry stepped off the last attic step.

"No, sir, it seems I've hardly begun. That box has an awful lot of things in it."

"Okay, tomorrow you can work on it some more."

Wednesday afternoon passed in the same fashion, except that at the end of the day Terry reported, "I've done my best, sir. And down at the bottom of the box I found this." His hand held out a one-dollar gold piece.

"You're hired for sure," said the old

man happily, shaking Terry's hand. "I put that dollar gold piece on the bottom of the box as a test. Most boys would become disgusted with the junk in that box before they reached the bottom, and quit."

"But didn't any of the other boys keep at it until they found the dollar?" asked Terry, surprised.

"Oh, yes," answered Mr. Peters. "Several did."

"Then why didn't you hire them?"

"Hire them!" exclaimed Mr. Peters. "I didn't hire them because they didn't pass the test. They kept the gold dollar and said nothing about it to me."

"But didn't they think you would know?" asked Terry.

"Oh, I suppose not," said the storekeeper. "They probably thought, 'How will Old Man Peters know there was a dollar in all this trash?' But you are the boy I want to have working for me. Not only do you stick to your work, but you are honest, too."

That evening the large block letters of the "BOY WANTED" sign were taken down from the store window.

Shadow of Danger

Matt was dreaming. He was sure of it. Mother wouldn't be calling him in the middle of the winter night. He curled back down under the patchwork quilts and shut his eyes.

But then he knew he wasn't dreaming, for his mother was shaking him gently. She sounded frightened, and she held Baby Leah in her arms. Leah was coughing, and her breath came in gasps. Suddenly Matt was wide awake.

"You'll have to get up, Matt," Mother said. "Leah has a bad attack of croup. You had it when you were a baby, but Leah has never had it before. You'll have to go to Aunt Sarah's and get some medicine. She'll know what to give you. Leah needs it soon."

Mother took Leah back by the fireplace in the main room of the cabin. Matt was already pulling on his homespun trousers and wool shirt. His mother had his heavy jacket warming by the fire. He struggled into it, laced his heavy boots, and pulled on the blue cap and mittens she had knitted

for him.

Leah was still in Mother's arms, wrapped in a shawl. Her little face was flushed and her blue eyes blurred with tears. She didn't look a bit like the happy baby girl who had romped on the floor with Matt before she went to bed.

"I'm sorry you have to go, Son, but since Father is gone I have to depend on you," his mother said. "You'll need to hurry, Matt. But don't run. You'll wear yourself out."

"I'll hurry as fast as I can," he promised his mother. Then he was out the door.



Matt was warm in his winter clothes, in spite of the frosty air and the snow covering the ground. Just the same, he shivered as he climbed the hill behind the cabin. He wasn't as brave as he wanted his mother to think he was. Though he would not have admitted it even to himself, the idea of going to Aunt Sarah's in the middle of the night filled him with terror.

Less than a year ago, Matt had lived in a little town in New England. It wasn't such a very up-to-date town, even in the 1890's, but there were stores and a druggist. The druggist might grumble if you came at night, but he was there to give you what you needed when someone was ill.

Then they had moved to the West, where life was much different. They lived in a log cabin, and neighbors were far apart. You had the things you needed, or you made them, or you did without. In a time of emergency, like tonight, you called on Aunt Sarah, who wasn't anybody's aunt, really, but was the nurse and advisor and doctor to all the neighbors when things went wrong.

Pioneering was fun, Matt had thought when he and his family had first come last

spring. The woods were full of song birds and rabbits and squirrels, and later he had found huckleberries, and then hazel nuts. He helped Father build the cabin and learned to milk the cow and take care of the horses. And a few days ago when Father had had to go to the nearest settlement for supplies, Matt had felt very grown-up as the man of the house. But he was careful to get Buttercup milked and the pigs fed before it got dark, because the woods that were so interesting in the day held unknown dangers at night. The snowy woods were thickest between Matt's cabin and Aunt Sarah's.

Matt followed the foot path he knew so well. It led across the little clearing away from the cabin, up the ridge, out across an open slope, then down through another cedar tangle. Then, at last, across the flat clearing that was Aunt Sarah's corn field in the summer. Matt remembered not to run, but he walked fast, and as he walked, he prayed.

"Dear Lord, please don't let there be any coyotes out tonight."

Through the pines and down across the bare hill hurried Matt. He had not seen

nor heard any coyotes yet.

Perhaps God would grant his prayers. Father had told him many times that there was no need to be afraid of the coyotes. They might carry off a lamb or even a calf, but they wouldn't attack a person.

That was easy for Father to say. Matt believed it himself, by the fireplace in the snug cabin. But when he was in bed in his little room at night and the pines loomed dark outside the windows, he could hear the coyotes howling. Their "yap-yap-yap-yar-r-r-r!" would fill the room, and Matt would pull the covers over his head and lie there trembling.

Now, here he was, out in the night, right in the woods where he often heard them. He hurried faster -- down through the cedar tangle and across the corn field, to Aunt Sarah's house near the river.

It did not take him long to wake Aunt Sarah. She was used to having folks come to her door at midnight when they were in trouble.

"This'll help the poor little girl," she said, wrapping some herbs in a bulky little package and tucking it into Matt's pocket. "And tell your mother to keep her warm

and keep the kettle steaming — though I expect she knows that," kindly Aunt Sarah went on, turning Matt's collar up around his ears. "You're a good boy, Matt."

Her words made Matt feel warm inside as he started across the corn field. The moon still shone, but a light fog from the river drifted across the field ahead of the chilly night wind. Then, suddenly, a shadow passed over — an enormous shadow. Slowly, silently, right over Matt's head and out in front of him it moved across the snow. From the tangle ahead came an eerie sound.

"Whooo-o-o! Whooo-o-o!"

Matt knew what the shadow was then. It was the shadow of an owl hunting an unfortunate rabbit. His mate was calling him from the cedar tangle. But Matt didn't know owls were so big!

"Just an owl," he said out loud. "No sense being afraid of an old owl." But he walked a little faster, just the same.

It was cold. Matt's breath rose from his lips in little white puffs, and he had to swing his hands to keep them warm, even in his blue mittens. But he was on his way home now — half way back across the corn

field, where the battered stalks stuck up through the snow.

Then, suddenly, he heard it. "Yap-yap-yap!" Not very loud, but it made the hair prickles on the back of Matt's neck. Walking faster, he prayed that God would lead the coyotes off in some other direction. Surely, that wasn't too much to ask!

But it was not to be like that. "Yap-yap-yap." The sound came again, trailing off into an eerie wail. Matt glanced back. Was that a shadow among the corn stalks—or a coyote?

"Yip-yip-yip!" A different note this time. Another one! Probably the mate of the first. Matt couldn't tell where the sound came from—it filled the air. His heart thumped against his ribs. He was nearly at the edge of the cedar thicket. What was waiting there?

Another wail, from nowhere and everywhere, filled the night. Matt glanced behind him as he entered the half-shadow of the woods. A gray form moved over the snow, following him.

He didn't intend to run. But suddenly his feet were pounding over the snowy path, carrying him around bends in the steep

trail, stumbling over frozen chunks of snow. Each time he glanced back, he was sure he saw more gray forms loping through the snow. The "yap-yap-yap-yarrrr" grew louder every minute.

His breath coming in sobs, Matt at last broke out of the woods. Now the trail led up across the open slope. But there was still the pine woods at the top of the ridge. Not daring to stop or even look back, Matt raced on up the trail.

One coyote wouldn't hurt you — but there must be a whole pack of them behind him. What if he fell down? Sprained his ankle or broke a leg? He could almost see the sharp teeth, the snarling lips.

Matt was nearly at the top of the slope. His feet were as heavy as lead, and the icy air felt like a knife in his chest. All at once Matt knew that he wasn't going to run another step.

He stopped. With a last desperate effort he snatched up a chunk of frozen snow, and not even aiming, flung it at the nearest beast. There was a surprised, "Yip!"

Matt's sudden stop took the coyote by surprise. It was only a few feet from him, and the hard chunk of snow caught him right



on the nose. He backed off, shaking his head.

Matt looked for the rest of the pack. A dozen? Twenty? His eyes popped in wonder. There were exactly two coyotes, and skinny-looking ones at that! Matt grabbed up a pine cone and threw it at the second coyote. It hit the frozen snow near by and slid along beside her.

"Get — out of here!" Matt yelled, running at the two of them. Startled, the coyotes turned and melted away like shadows, down across the slope.

Matt was still breathing hard, and he was weak with relief. As he stood there, catching his breath, a shadow passed across the snowy slope — the shadow of the owl, still hunting his supper. But it wasn't so big now. Why was that? All at once a grin spread over Matt's face.

"It was the fog, I guess," he said out loud. "The fog made the owl's shadow look big and scary. Just like two skinny coyotes seemed like a whole pack, because I was afraid of them."

God hadn't kept the coyotes away. But he had done something far better. He had helped Matt be brave enough to face them, even if he was afraid.

Matt turned and hurried up the trail through the pines toward the top of the ridge. The precious medicine for little Leah was safe in his pocket, and a new kind of courage was in his heart.



When Father Prays

When Father prays the house is still,
His voice is slow and deep,
We shut our eyes, the clock ticks loud,
So quiet we must keep.

He prays that we may be good boys,
And later on, good men;
And then we squirm and think we won't
Have any quarrels again.

You'd never think, to look at Dad,
He once had tempers too,
I guess if Father needs to pray,
We youngsters surely do.

Sometimes the prayer gets very long
And hard to understand,
And then I wriggle up quite close,
And let him hold my hand.

I can't remember all of it,
I'm little yet, you see,
But one thing I can not forget,
My father prays for me!

- Author Unknown

Room to Spare

Long ago, before there were such things as cars and telephones, an old man and his wife lived in a little house at the very edge of a Western American town. They were not really townspeople, because they had spent their younger years on a farm out on the prairie. There they had worked hard to earn a living for themselves and their children.

Now the children were all grown and married, and it was no longer necessary for Elias and Maude (as the couple was named) to work so hard. It was a good thing, too, because Elias and Maude had long passed the age when people nowadays retire.

At first Elias and Maude thought their home at the edge of town was just what they needed. They had their house, a small barn for a few animals, and a field in which their horse and cow could graze. The cow gave enough milk to supply Elias and Maude not only with milk, but with cheese and butter as well. Their dozen hens scratched for their grain and ate the table scraps

Maude brought them. In return they laid enough eggs to help keep the aged couple in groceries. (In those days people didn't buy the few groceries they needed with money; they traded eggs, butter, and cheese for them.)

With their cozy house and their animals to keep them busy, Elias and Maude should have been happy. And they were until one day when the work was done, Maude sat down and started to think. After a while she got up and walked around. She went into the living room and then into the bedroom.

"How crowded our little rooms are!" she thought. "This house is much too small for us. We have only four rooms — a kitchen, a living room, a bedroom, and a little storage room."

That night at the supper table Maude said, "Do you know, Elias, this house is too little for us. Just look how crowded it is. Why, we couldn't buy another piece of furniture if we wanted to, because we wouldn't have room for it."

Elias looked around the dimly lit kitchen. "I guess you are right," he agreed. "This house is rather crowded."

"I wish we had money to build a bigger house," said Maude wistfully. "We'd build it so that we would have plenty of room."

"Big houses are a lot of work," reminded Elias. "You would have to work hard to take care of such a big house."

"I thought about that, too," said Maude. "But I have it all figured out. We would hire a maid to work for us. She would clean our house, churn the cream into butter, and milk our cow. She would run errands for us and wash and mend our clothes. If we had a maid, we could sit down and enjoy life."

Elias shook his head sadly. "I'm sorry, but there is no money to build a new house, much less hire a maid to take care of it," he said. "We will just have to get along the best we can with what we have."

Maude sighed unhappily. She tried to forget her dream, but she couldn't. It stuck to her like a burr on a woolen coat. It haunted her all the following days. When she was churning the butter, she thought, "If I had a maid, I would not have to be doing this." When she went to the storage room for a piece of homemade soap, she stood and looked at the boxes that were

piled all the way to the ceiling. "If we had a bigger house, I would not have to pile the boxes so high," she thought.

Maude no longer sang as she worked. How could she sing when she wasn't happy? And how could she be happy when she had to live in such a crowded little house?

Elias wasn't happy either. He missed his wife's singing. He missed her cheerfulness. The more he thought about it, the more he wished there were a way to give his wife a bigger home. After all, she had been a good wife to him all these years. She had taken care of the children when they were sick and gotten up during the night when they needed something. She had toiled hard for many years on their prairie farm. She had cooked countless meals for the family. She had carried water from the spring and wood from the woodhouse. Yes, if ever a wife deserved a nice big house and a maid, Maude did.

At last Elias could stand it no longer. "I know what I will do," he said one day when they were halfway through a silent meal. "I will go talk to Judge Wilson. He is a very wise man who has helped many people out of trouble. Maybe he will be able to help us, too."

"Well, yes," said Maude happily. "Why didn't we think of that before? A wise man like him will surely have good advice."

That very afternoon Elias went to see Judge Wilson. The judge welcomed him into his house and listened to his story. He scratched his bald head and stroked his long, white beard thoughtfully, but he did not say much.

"Please help my wife," pleaded Elias, when the story had all been told. "She is a good woman. She worked hard to take care of me and the children when she was younger. She is a good cook, a good nurse, a fast worker, and a good companion as long as she is happy."

Judge Wilson nodded his head. "You have a problem all right, and I think I know just what you and your wife need," he said. "The trouble is, I can not give it to you now, because I do not have it. All I can do is promise to give it as soon as I find it."

A puzzled frown crossed Elias's brow. He wanted to ask questions, but the judge silenced him. "I will come and see you as soon as I can help you," he said.

Elias hurried home to tell his wife what the judge had said. "He will help us, but

he does not have what we need right now. He will give it to us as soon as he finds it."

At first Maude was as puzzled as Elias, but it did not take her long to figure things out. "Why, a bigger house, of course," she said. "The judge will find us a house that is big enough, with room to spare. It is too much to expect him to have one right off, but he will look around and find one for us. And he will surely find a maid for us, too."

When Maude went back to work, she was singing. It was not hard to put up with a little house when she could look forward to a bigger one. She could work cheerfully when she knew that she would soon have a maid to work for her.

One day went by. Two days went by. Three days went by. Elias and Maude kept an eye on the road, hoping to see the wise judge come riding up to their house. When they sat in their house in the evening, they strained their ears to hear a knock on the door.

But the judge did not come.

"Maybe he has forgotten us," said Maude. "Why don't you go and remind him of his promise?"

"Maybe he is having a hard time finding the house we need," said Elias. "We will wait a while longer."

One morning when Elias and Maude were at the breakfast table they heard a knock on the door. They both jumped up so fast that their chairs fell over backward. When Elias opened the door, there stood Judge Wilson.

"Have you found it?" asked Maude eagerly. "Is it bigger than this house?"

The judge looked around the kitchen. He smiled slowly, but then his face sobered again. "I'm sorry, but I do not have what you expect," he said kindly. "I have come to you with my problem. I thought maybe you could help me."

Elias and Maude were both surprised to hear that a wise man like Judge Wilson had problems, too. They felt honored to have him come to them for help. "What is it?" asked Maude, her voice filled with sympathy.

"We have a very unfortunate family in the community," the judge said sadly. "Their house burned down last night. The man was able to save his wife and children, but he could not save the house."

"Oh, but the house can be replaced, whereas the lives of the wife and children could not be restored," said Elias. "I think the man should be grateful that he saved the family."

"Yes, that is true," agreed the judge. "We want to help him build a new house. But meanwhile the family will have to find a place to stay. It is not easy to find anyone who is willing to take in a family of five lively youngsters."

"No, I guess it isn't," said Elias. He scratched his head and stared at the floor, trying hard to think of some way in which he could help.

"We'll take them in -- the poor homeless dears," Maude spoke up.

"You? With your little house?" cried the judge in surprise. "Surely, you are being very kind and unselfish to even think about it."

"We will be crowded, but it will hardly be for long," said Maude.

"About four or five weeks," answered the judge.

"It is summer and the children can play outdoors," Maude went on. "Some of the children can sleep on straw ticks in the

loft, like our own children did when they were still at home."

"The three boys will enjoy that," said Judge Wilson, nodding his head. "But what about the man and his wife and the two little girls. They will need a place to sleep, too."

"We will move our bed into the storage room and let them have our bedroom," said Maude. "If we had a trundle bed for the little girls —"

"My wife and I have a trundle bed that we don't use," said the judge. "I am sure the other neighbors will have things they want to share with the unfortunate family, too. Do you have room for the things the people give them?"

"We will make room," said Maude, determination in her voice. She led the way into the living room and began to plan how they would rearrange the furniture in order to make room for the family who was moving in. The judge had some good advice now and then, but Maude did most of the planning.

II. Busy Days

Mr. and Mrs. West and their five children came that same forenoon. Judge Wilson brought them, then he and Elias and Mr. West took the wagon and went to pick up the things the neighbors had for them.

Maude bustled around, busily preparing dinner, but she still took time to welcome Mrs. West and make her feel at home. It was not long until the two women were working side by side in the kitchen.

The table, which was usually set for two, was pulled out from the wall and extra boards were put in. It seemed to take up half of the small kitchen, but Maude was too busy to mind. By working harder and faster than she had for a long time, she managed to have a good meal ready when the men came back. The judge stayed for dinner, and afterwards they all helped each other rearrange the furniture and put everything in place.

That night Elias and Maude went to bed in the storage room. The little room was so crowded that all that was left empty was a little path leading from the door to the bed. But Maude did not complain. She was

too tired to even notice.

Yes, Maude was tired, but she was very happy. It had been a long time since she had done so much for someone else. It gave her a happy feeling to know she was doing something for the family who had lost nearly everything they had by fire.

Days went by. They were busy days for Maude, but they were happy days. She enjoyed Mrs. West and the children. She enjoyed cooking big pots of food for the hungry family. She baked big batches of bread and cookies and ginger bread.

Of course, Maude did not have to do all the work herself. Mrs. West helped all she could, but sometimes that was not very much. On some days the baby was fussy. On some days Mrs. West had to go with her husband to the house they were building. On some days it rained, and all the children had to stay indoors. Then Mrs. West was busy keeping everyone out of mischief.

Elias and Maude were not the only people who wanted to help the West family. Hardly a day passed without someone driving up with a cart or wagon loaded with food and clothes and supplies for the West family. Within a week the house was so full, it

looked as if it would not hold another thing. But Maude always managed to find room.

At last the storeroom was so full, Elias and Maude had to climb over things to get to bed. "This will never do," said Maude. "Tomorrow we will move our bed into the living room. Then we can get to it without climbing over things, and the storage room will hold more of Mr. and Mrs. West's things."

"Into the living room!" Elias exclaimed. "The living room is full the way it is."

"Not so full that we can't make room for our bed," Maude said. She fell asleep making plans how she could crowd the furniture together a little more.

Elias and Maude's bed was moved into the living room. Now the children did not have any playing space on the floor, so they played on the bed. This was just as good, because now they were out of danger of being stepped on.

Every night before Elias and Maude could retire, they had to clear off the bed. And the things they didn't find on it! Rag dolls, blocks, shoes, stockings, stick horses, bits of paper the children had found and cut up!



"Why don't we just move out and let them have the house?" grumbled Elias one evening when he was feeling extra tired.

"Oh, we couldn't do that," said Maude. "It will not be long now until their new house is ready."

No one can really blame Elias for complaining. He worked hard all day, and in the evening when he wanted to sit on his rocking chair, Mrs. West was often there with the baby. And the few times he did sit down in his favorite chair, he found out how crowded the house really was. There was not even room for him to stretch out his legs!

Then came the happy day when the West's new house was done. Moving day was another busy day for everyone. First they took the things that belonged to the West family to the new house and tried to put things in order there. Then Elias and Maude came home and put their own things back where they belonged. They had just started when Judge Wilson walked in to help them.

All the boards were taken out of the table and it was pushed back into its place against the wall. The bed was put back in the bedroom where it belonged, and the furniture spread out. Even before the rearranging was finished, Maude started to get supper. She invited the judge to stay and eat with them.

"Oh, no, not tonight," he said. "I may come back some other time, but tonight you are too tired to have company for supper."

So the judge went home and Maude set the table for two. She and Elias sat down and ate supper. After a while Maude looked around the kitchen and said, "Am I imagining things, or is this kitchen bigger than it used to be?"

Elias stopped eating and looked around. "It sure seems bigger," he said.

When Maude went into the living room after supper, she paused in the doorway and looked around. The bed was no longer there. The furniture was spread out. There were no toys and stick horses scattered around.

"I was just thinking," Maude said to Elias, who came to stand beside her. "We asked the judge to find a bigger house for us, but now I'm not sure that we need it."

"Maybe we don't," said Elias, sitting down in the rocking chair and stretching out his feet. Having enough room to stretch out his feet like this made him very happy. He wanted to say something that would make his wife happy, too. "If we don't spend money on a bigger house, we could perhaps hire a maid to help keep this house clean. We can put our bed into the storage room and let her have our bedroom."

"We could do that if it was necessary," Maude agreed. "But I can't see that we need a maid. I found out the last four weeks that working hard doesn't hurt me."

Elias rocked slowly back and forth. Maude sat down on her low chair and started to knit. As she was knitting, she was thinking. Being a pretty wise woman herself, she began to figure things out. "Do you know, Elias," she said at last. "Judge Wilson is as sly as he is wise. Asking us to take in the West family was just his way of helping us find out that this house is big enough for us."

Elias chuckled and once more looked around the uncrowded room. "It sure looks big enough to me," he said.

"It is big enough, with plenty of room to spare," said Maude, knitting a little faster. "It is just the house we need."



The Garden

Once, on a time some little hands
Planted a garden on the sands.
And with a wish to keep it dry
They raised a wall five inches high.

Within the wall and round the walks
They made a fence of slender stalks.
And then they formed an arbor cool,
And dug in front a tiny pool.

Their beds were oval, round, and square
Thrown up and trimmed with decent care.
In these they planted laurel twigs,
And prickly holly, little sprigs

Of ash and poplar; and for show
Bright daffodils and heart's ease low.
With pink-edged daisies by the score
And buttercups and many more.

One rose they found with great delight,
And set it round with lilies bright.
This finished, then they went away,
Resolved to come another day.

The sea, meanwhile, with solemn roar
Approached and washed the sandy shore.
But all this time it did not touch
The little spot they loved so much.

The strangers that were passing by,
The garden viewed with smiling eye.
But no one ventured to disturb
A single plant, or flower, or herb.

Still when the children came again,
They found their labor all in vain.
The flowers were drooping side by side;
The rose and lilies— all had died.

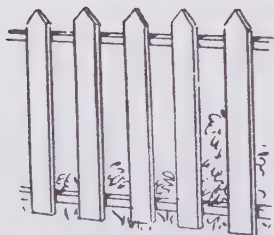
No one could make them grow or shoot,
Because they had not any root.
And then the soil, it was so bad
They must have withered, if they had.

Now, so it is that children fail,
Just like the garden in this tale.
They have good wishes, pleasant looks,
Are busy with their work and books.
Their conduct often gives delight;
And one would fancy all was right.

But by and by with sad surprise,
We see how all this goodness dies.
Instead of being rich with fruit,
They fade away for want of root.

Oh! pray that He who only can
Renew the heart of fallen man,
May plant you in His pleasant ground
Where trees of righteousness abound.
So shall you be in early youth,
"Rooted and grounded in the Truth."

— Sander's Union Reader, 1896



Unit Six

LEARNING FROM ANIMALS

ALL THINGS BRIGHT

All things bright and beautiful,
All creatures great and small,
All things wise and wonderful,
The Lord God made them all.

Each little flower that opens,
Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colors,
He made their tiny wings.

The purple-headed mountain,
The river running by,
The sunset and the morning
That brighten up the sky.

The cold wind in the winter,
The pleasant summer sun,
The ripe fruits in the garden,
He made them, every one.

The tall trees in the greenwood,
The meadows where we play,
The rushes by the water
We gather every day.

He gave us eyes to see them,
And lips that we might tell
How great is God Almighty,
Who has made all things well.

A Home for Jenny Wren

"Hello, I'm home," called out Laura Gerber. She listened for an answer, but the house was silent. "Mom must be out in the garden," thought the brown-eyed girl. Placing her lunch pail on the sink in the kitchen, she fumbled through the cupboard and took out a plastic glass. She poured it full of milk. "Hmmm, this tastes good," said Laura to herself. She sat on the kitchen stool and leaned comfortably against the cabinet.

The porch door slammed. A woman came in carrying a basket of freshly gathered eggs. She was short and stocky. Her hands were rough from farm work. A faded green scarf was tightly wrapped around her hair, but a few stray wisps of brown poked out the side.

"Oh, Laura, you startled me," said Mrs. Gerber, when she saw her daughter seated on the stool half hidden by the cabinet. "Home from school already?"

"Yes," answered the young girl, pausing a second from her cool drink. "School let

out fifteen minutes early. But the boys had to stay and help put desks up in the attic."

"Why are they storing desks away so soon? The school term isn't over for another month."

Laura tipped the glass back as far as she could to catch the last drops. "There have been four empty desks in the schoolhouse ever since semester time. You know, that's when the Lehmans moved to Wisconsin. Teacher wants to use the space for a table, I think. But I don't know what he wants to put on it."

The screen door slammed the second time. Victor Gerber came puffing into the kitchen. Spying his sister holding a glass, he said, "What are you drinking? There better be some for me, too. After climbing around in that dusty attic at school, I need something good to drink."

Laura pretended not to have heard him, but then held up the pitcher of milk. "It's only half empty. I saved the rest for you."

"Victor, why don't you get a bucket of fresh water?" his mother suggested. "That water has been in here since noon. It must be stale by now."

The lanky sandy-haired boy poured the stale water into the wash basin and went outside to the pump. Minutes later he returned with a nearly overflowing pail of well water.

When the evening chores were finished and the family was seated at the supper table, Mr. Gerber asked the children, "Anything interesting happen at school today?"

Victor had his mouth full of mashed potatoes, but Laura spoke up, "No, just the same old stuff — English, reading, arithmetic, and geography."

"We had something special," added Victor eagerly.

"What?" wondered Laura, looking as if she had been left out on some secret.

"In nature class the teacher told us we are going to each have a special project. The boys are to make bird houses and the girls windowbox gardens."

"Just the fifth graders?" asked Laura.

"All the upper graders," answered her brother.

Laura looked disappointed, for she was in the fourth grade. But her mother cheered her by saying, "Maybe Laura could help you, Victor."

"Could I?" pleaded Laura, her eyes showing real interest.

Victor shrugged his shoulders. "I don't think anyone is supposed to help me." He dipped his knife into the strawberry jam. "We're going to get a grade on our projects." But when he saw the sad look on Laura's face he added, "I guess it wouldn't be wrong if you watched me and handed me tools. That way we could sort of do it together."

"A nature project sounds real worthwhile," encouraged Father. "What type of bird house are you going to make, a martin house?"

"I'm not sure," answered Victor. "But I thought I'd make a wren house."

"Oh, do!" agreed Laura. "I think a wren is the nicest bird."

Mother nodded. "It would be nice to have a wren living in the maple tree by the kitchen window. I could hear it sing while I work."

"Well, if you really want a wren house," Victor smiled, "that's what I'll make."

After evening chores for the next five days, Victor would hurry out to his father's shop and work on the wren house. Laura

was always leaning over his shoulder, watching, and she was eager to run any errand for her carpenter brother.

By Saturday evening the project was completed. Victor carried it carefully into the house. Laura trailed close at his heels. Mother and Father could not admire the bird house enough. The pieces had been cut and fitted so well that it looked like an excellent job. The sides were painted green and were very smooth. The roof was black, made from left-over shingles from the Gerber's new milkhouse roof.

"What's this?" asked Father, appearing very surprised. His hand lifted one side of the roof. "Why, it opens!"

"I put hinges on the roof," explained Victor. "When the baby birds are hatched, Laura and I can peek in and see them. And in the winter we can reach in and take out the old nest."

"Now that's a real good idea," said Father. "With a nice bird house like this, you should get an 'A'."

A very happy boy went walking to school on Monday morning. He carried the bird house, while Laura carried both lunch pails. When they arrived at school, some

of the younger children stopped swinging and gathered around to admire the bird house. Laura delighted in holding the black roof open for the children to peek into the snug little wren house.

That morning the table in the schoolroom shone with fresh paint -- the bright colors of nine new bird houses and seven window-boxes. During nature class the upper graders stood around the table while the teacher inspected the projects. Laura and the other lower graders put their pencils down and listened to what the teacher said.

"I am very pleased with your projects, children. I believe all of you did your best. So everyone receives an 'A'."

The students smiled at one another.

"But," he added, "I did notice a few mistakes or flaws on some." He picked up Wilma Miller's windowbox and pointed out a few places where she had missed the nail and struck the wood. The small dents gave one corner a rough appearance. Then he lifted Victor's wren house. "The carpenter work on this bird house is very well done," he began. "The hinged roof, too, is a good idea. But there is one thing that seems wrong to me." Turning to the boys, he

asked, "Can any of you see what is wrong?"

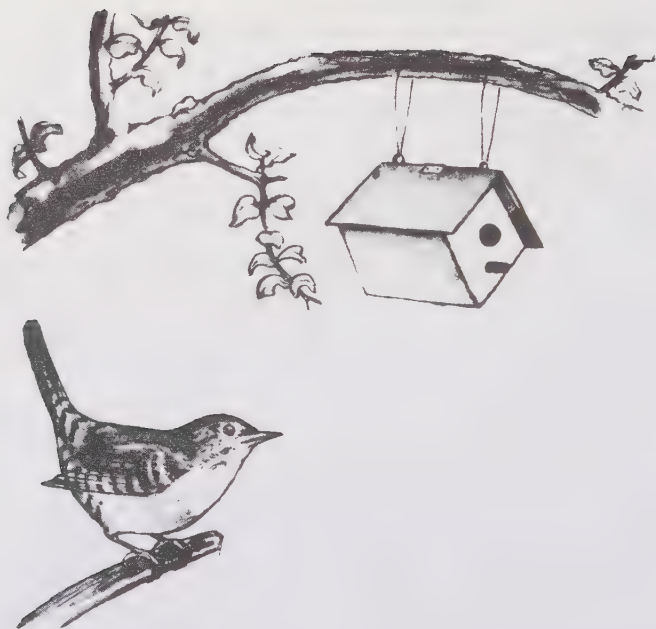
There was a long pause. The boys studied the bird house. Victor looked embarrassed. Just when the teacher was about to tell them, Andy Yoder blurted out, "The hole's too big."

There was a chorus of agreement. The teacher smiled at Victor. "Yes, the hole is too big. A wren house needs a hole just large enough for a wren to squeeze in, but small enough to keep a sparrow or starling out."

At the supper table that evening Victor told of the "A" he had received for his project, but also about the hole being too big.

"I wouldn't worry about that, son," said Father. "It's still a real nice bird house. Hang it up in the maple tree. Some wren is probably flying around right now, looking for a nice place to live."

Father's words encouraged Victor. "Besides," he told himself, "if a sparrow moves in first, I can reach in and take her nest out." So after supper he carried a ladder over to the maple tree by the kitchen window. He fastened a piece of wire to the hook on the bird house roof and wound the wire around a good-sized branch. "That's



a good enough place for it," he told Laura, who was steadying the ladder.

The next afternoon right after school, Victor and Laura hurried home. They set their lunch pails on the back porch and went to fetch the ladder. Setting it under the bird house, the children were startled to see a sparrow come flying out.

"Teacher was right," said Victor, half crying and very disgusted. "The hole is too big." Climbing up the ladder, he stated

sharply, "Well, I didn't build this house for a nuisance like a sparrow." Moments later handfuls of hay, string, and feathers fluttered to the ground. "That ought to fix Mrs. Sparrow," Victor said matter-of-factly.

But that did not fix Mrs. Sparrow. The next afternoon the children found the wren house once again occupied by a sparrow. A second time Victor cleaned it out.

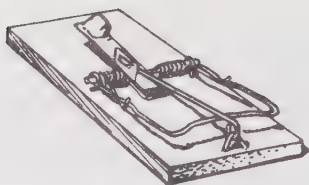
Coming down the ladder, Victor asked Laura, "What can we do to keep that sparrow from building her nest in our wren house?"

Laura shook her head. "I don't know. Why don't you ask Dad?"

"No, we should be able to think of something ourselves," he said. Suddenly his eyes lighted up. "Why, I've got it. Let's set a mousetrap inside the bird house. That ought to get rid of the sparrow for us."

"That's a great idea," agreed Laura. "There's one on the floor in the wash house."

So off ran Laura to find the mousetrap. She soon returned with it.



"I won't set it until I am up the ladder," said Victor. Up the ladder he went. He set the trap and placed it inside the bird house. "Tomorrow at this time we should have caught the sparrow," he said excitedly. "Let's keep our plan a secret until then."

Wednesday seemed to last twice as long as usual for the Gerber children. Countless times their minds wandered away from their school work. All they could think of was the mousetrap in the bird house. They could imagine Mrs. Sparrow flying in with a bit of straw to build her third nest — then SMACK! She would be caught.

The final bell rang and the pupils were dismissed. Victor and Laura did not linger to chat with their school chums. They went home quickly. Nor did they bother to put their lunch pails inside the back door at

home. They went straight for the shop and the ladder beside the work bench. In their rush to get to the tree, they nearly tripped and dropped the ladder.

"Hold the ladder while I climb up," Victor told Laura, as he set the stepladder under the maple branch.

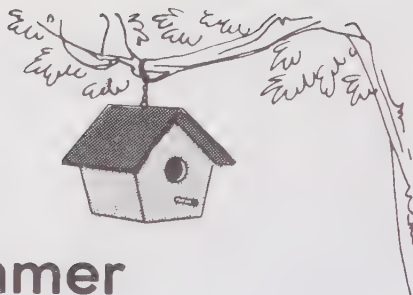
Victor scrambled up the wobbly ladder, opened the hinged roof, and peered in. "Ohh..hh!" he cried, his face wearing a tragic look.

"What's wrong?" Laura asked excitedly. "What's wrong?"

"She's dead, Laura," sobbed Victor. "We killed her." His hand held the mouse-trap out for her to see. There, dangling from the wire arm of the trap, was Jenny Wren.



One



Summer

with the Wrens

We know that when God made the earth and all living things, he provided food and surroundings to suit each creature. But I did not realize how carefully those needs were met until the summer the wrens shared our home.

We first saw the house wrens in early spring. My husband, my daughter Carol, my son Stephen, and I watched as the pair of them took over the birdhouse Stephen had built.

First the mother bird hopped from the branch of the holly tree to the top of the birdhouse fastened to the tree trunk. Then she popped in the little round door. The

father bird, his pert little tail almost straight up, sat impatiently on a branch. The mother came out, and he went in. He seemed to look the house over carefully. He came out and hopped onto the roof. Would it leak? Could the cats reach the house easily? The little brown birds discussed each detail, it seemed to us, with lively chirps and twitters.

Then they were gone. We did not see them for several days. But one morning father wren came with a small twig which he took into the house. The female came with another twig. They talked over the nest-building with much scolding and chirping. Sometimes they carried twigs out. Too big? Too small? We could only guess.

After the nest was done, we saw very little of the mother. But father wren sat in the holly tree and sang a carefree song.

At the end of about two weeks, we began to see the little mother again. She was very quiet now as she came to the bird-house with food for the newly-hatched babies. She brought plant lice, grubs, and small insects.

There was little rest for the busy wren. The father was gone. Perhaps he thought his part of the job was done. In a week we could hear the babies call to their mother when she brought them food. In two weeks we saw small heads at the doorway, with beaks wide open for a gnat or beetle.

We watched the wrens one evening as we sat in the front yard. The breeze felt cool after the heat of the day. Back and forth went the busy little mother.

"Chirp. Chirp," called a baby.

"Are you calling your mommy?" said Carol, looking up.

"Chirp! Chirp! Chirp!" Another small head appeared. For a while the children amused themselves by calling to the birds and listening for the answering chirp. They were so like children waiting for their mother that we could not help laughing at them.

But then we began to think it wasn't funny at all. Where was the mother? It was growing dusk. She should have come back to settle for the night by this time. We realized that twenty minutes had passed since we had seen her.

"Chirp! Chirp!" the little ones called more urgently. We listened with growing fear. Five minutes passed, then, fifteen. It was quite dark. Still no mother wren!

"A cat must have caught her," we said sadly. "She would have come back if she could."

What could we do? We couldn't let the babies starve. While the children's father got the birdhouse down from the tree, I put an egg on to boil.

The birdhouse roof, fortunately, was removable. We took it off, expecting to find a cup-shaped nest at the bottom of the house. But we had a surprise.

"Why, it's full of twigs," Stephen said. And so it was. Loosely packed twigs filled the house except for a narrow passage from the doorway near the top to the nest at the bottom. No creature could have reached the babies through that tangle of twigs.

Two small wrens perched on the twigs near the doorway, chirping and calling for food. Another struggled up from the nest, his small clawed feet grasping each twig tightly. Two more babies, a little smaller, were still in the nest.

"Five babies!" the children exclaimed.
"How shall we feed them?"

"Get the tweezers," I said. The egg was cooked now. We cooled and peeled it, then mashed the yolk in a saucer, as we have done for baby chicks. I picked up a bit of the yolk with the tweezers.

"How far down their throats shall I put it?" I wondered. I need not have worried. As soon as the food touched the eager beak, the first little bird stretched up its neck and snatched it. We fed first one and then another until all seemed satisfied. They settled down with sleepy twitterings. Carol covered them with a piece of warm flannel.

By daybreak they were hungry again. Two hours later they had another meal. We began to see how very busy the mother wren had been, searching for food and bringing it to the five babies a bite at a time.

I wish I could say the little wrens grew up and flew away. But they did not. At first they seemed to thrive on our well-meaning, if clumsy, care. But then one of the smaller babies died. Then another. We varied their diet with scalded chopped beef and plant lice picked from the rose

bushes. They ate hungrily and snuggled under our cupped hands without fear. But somehow our care was lacking. One by one, the babies drooped. Their eyes grew dull, the once-smooth feathers rumped, and by the end of the week, the last one lay dead. Sadly, we buried it with the others under the fir tree.

Even though the story ended sadly, we were glad for this chance to know the little wrens. Through God's wisdom, the mother knew just what her babies needed. When we found them, they were as clean as baby birds could be. Every small feather was in its place. The nest was spotless. Not a bit of eggshell or a stray feather was in sight. Only some unknown tragedy had kept the little mother from raising her babies and passing on to them all she knew about raising baby wrens.

God does care for wrens — and for thousands of other creatures, large and small. But for boys and girls, and their mothers and fathers, he cares in a much more wonderful way. "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?...Ye are of more

value than many sparrows," we read in Luke 12:6-7.

God gives us mothers and fathers to help care for our bodily needs. And he sent his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die that we might be saved and live forever with him. How wonderful that we can trust him for all our needs.

The Shining Web

A hungry spider made a web
Of thread so very fine,
Your tiny fingers scarce could feel
The little slender line.

Round about and round about,
And round about it spun;
Straight across and back again,
Until the web was done.

Oh, what a pretty shining web
It was when it was done!
The little flies all came to see
It hanging in the sun.

Round about and round about,
And round about they danced;
Across the web and back again,
They darted and they glanced.

The hungry spider sat and watched
The happy little flies;
It saw all around about its head—
It had so many eyes.
Round about and round about,
And round about they go;
Across the web and back again,
Now high again, now low.

"I am hungry, very hungry,"
Said the spider to the fly;
"If you would come into my house,
We'd eat some, you and I."
But round about and round about,
And round about once more;
Across the web and back again,
They flitted as before.

For all the flies were much too wise
To venture near the spider;
They flapped their little wings and flew
In circles rather wider.
Round about and round about,
And round about went they;
Across the web and back again,
And then they flew away.

— Barnes Reader, 1884



The Seeing Eye

There were eight men in the class which was being formed at The Seeing Eye, eight blind men who had come to learn how to use their dog guides. It had taken the trainers four years to become experts. It had taken three months to train the dogs. Now it would take another month for each blind man to learn to work with his own dog.

There were young men and men of middle age. Some of them had just become blind, others had been blind for a long time. But

they all had one thing in common — the hope that having a dog gave them. Their relatives or friends brought them to the door and they shuffled into the strange room and stood there helplessly, waiting for someone to take them by the arm and lead them to their rooms. They had the uncertainty which sightless people so often have. They did not try to do anything without help.

Their reception surprised them. Everyone greeted them in a friendly way, but no one acted as though the fact that they were blind made much difference. They were all treated very much alike.

They came through the double front doors and stood in the big entrance hall. On one side was a fireplace. Straight ahead of them was a wide stairway that led to their rooms upstairs. The house, now called The Seeing Eye, was old-fashioned, rambling, and comfortable.

"We'll take you over the house the first day, so you'll know just where everything is," the blind men were told. "After that you are supposed to find your way about for yourself."

Mike was one of the first blind men to arrive. Hopelessness was written on his dark face. He stood in the living room, answering without any spirit the greetings and questions. When someone offered to take him to his room, he stumbled up the stairs with the air of a man who doesn't care what happens.

His guide held his arm and walked with him about his room helping him to locate the various objects.

"The bed is here — the dresser on this side. There are four drawers. Here is a big chair. Over here is a table. Your suitcase is on the bed. You'll have time to unpack before lunch."

"Unpack?" Mike cried. "Are you crazy?"

"Why not?" asked his guide calmly. "There is nothing the matter with your arms, is there?"

"No, there is nothing the matter with my arms," Mike answered. "But I haven't done anything like that for myself for more than a year. I can't do things when I'm blind, can I?"

"Why can't you?" asked his guide. "Just because you are blind is no reason why you shouldn't do the things you can do. You'll

have to learn to do them here. You might as well start now. You'll like it once you try."

"I can't try," Mike said. "This is a fine way to treat a man. Haven't you any sympathy for a fellow? I should think you'd show me a little respect because I'm blind."

"Why should I?" the guide answered, as he opened the door. "I'm blind, too."

And the door closed, leaving a surprised and humbled Mike.

The German shepherd dogs that are to be trained to lead the blind at The Seeing Eye in Morristown, New Jersey, are not taken there until they are fourteen months old. When these pups first arrive at The Seeing Eye, they are known as "green" pups, because they are young and new. They are kept in kennels, usually two or more to a stall, next to a high, wire-fenced enclosure. Several times each day they are let out for exercise.

Dogs who are being taught to be guides have to learn to take a blind man through crowded streets, up and down steps, into all kinds of traffic, without a mistake and

without hesitating. After they are educated they are truly eyes for their blind masters.

A dog guides a blind man by means of a leather-covered handle which is fastened to the dog's harness. The blind man holds the handle in his left hand and follows every movement of the dog's body. After a while the blind man and his dog move almost as one person, the man giving the commands and the dog carrying them out.

With his trainer a dog goes across streets, up and down stairs, and into all sorts of out-of-the-way places. At first he thinks it is a game. He moves swiftly, eager to obey the trainer's commands. But almost immediately he discovers something is wrong. When he springs forward at the word of command, and there is something in the way, the trainer stumbles, and sometimes falls. When he does not allow enough margin for a tree or a post, the man crashes into it with a force that brings the dog up short.

After a while the dog will begin to understand that he must think not only for himself, but for the man he is guiding. Before he can obey the command "Forward" he must be sure that the way is clear for both

of them. It isn't enough that there is a space large enough for a dog to get through. It must be wide enough and high enough for the man as well. This man depends upon his dog to guide him and guide him safely. His commands must be carried out with a true understanding of what is best for the man.

At The Seeing Eye the dogs are not only trained, but educated. These dogs must learn to think for themselves and to solve problems correctly for their masters. The master's comfort and safety — and often his life — depend on the dog's correct solution.

II. A Dog at Work

After a dog is given to a blind man at The Seeing Eye, the two are never separated again, and the man takes complete charge of his new friend. So the first thing to learn is how to keep a dog comfortable and happy. The trainer teaches the men how to do this. They learn that the dogs should be fed twice a day, and brushed every day to keep their coats in good condition. If this is done, German shepherds seldom need to be bathed. They must also be treated with

affection and rewarded for everything they do with great praise. They work well for their masters only because they love them; so the first thing for a blind man to do is to make a friend of his dog and to win his complete affection.

Bob, one of the blind men who came to The Seeing Eye, had always been fond of dogs. But the first day of working with Hero, his dog, was not too easy — even for Bob.

The trainer fastened a strap to Bob's left arm, and held the end of it in his hand as he followed Bob and Hero along the sidewalk of a quiet street in Morristown. In his other hand he held a stick with a big crook, so that in a moment of danger he could jerk Bob back to safety. Hero walked on Bob's left side, so that Bob held the handle which was fastened to the harness in his left hand.

They went down the sidewalk at a great rate. Dog guides always move rapidly, especially at first, so their masters will feel the difference in pace when they slow down for a curb or some object that is in the way.

Bob, plunging into darkness to which he was still not used to, felt that he was being hurled helplessly through space. He was breathless, his face grew hot, his hands were like ice. Suppose Hero forgot to stop at a curb and let him step down in front of an automobile. Suppose somebody suddenly turned into a driveway. Suppose the pavement was slippery. Suppose —

His forehead was wet. He wished that he could stop long enough to pull a handkerchief from his pocket and mop. What a coward he was! Hadn't he been told a dozen times, "Your dog will lead you if you let him. Do your part and don't worry about him. Just try to understand what he is telling you."

Bob knew that was true. He hated himself for being so frightened.

There was a sudden pull on the handle. Hero had stopped, and was telling him that there was a step, probably a curb. Good old Hero. There he was, as nervous as Bob was, but doing his job. Bob suddenly felt ashamed. He reached down to pat the dog's big shoulder.

"Nice boy," he said. "Nice fellow. Good dog." He found the curb with his foot, and drew a long breath as he stood for one terrifying moment on its edge.

They were going to cross a street. He could hear the automobiles going past, almost touching him. There was so much traffic. His quick ear caught the sound of a motorcycle. Traffic went so fast. Suppose Hero didn't see it in time. Suppose —



He squared his shoulders. There was no time for supposing. "Good dog, Hero," he said again. "All right, boy. Forward."

There was an answering jerk on the handle, and Hero led him into the street. The sounds of traffic all around them were confusing, but Hero moved steadily on. Bob's heart pounded. Certainly they had come too far. They must have crossed the street by now. They were walking so fast. Where were they? Why didn't the trainer stop them? Hero was turning first one way, then another, taking a twisted path which Bob found very difficult to follow. There seemed to be a great deal of noise. Oh, the terrible blackness! If only he could see!

And then Hero paused, and Bob's foot found the curb and he stepped up. His hands were shaking as he bent to give the usual praise to Hero.

Then he heard the trainer's voice.

"What a dog!" he cried. "Do you know, Bob, he just brought you through one of the worst traffic jams we have ever had down here. There has been an automobile accident, and both cars are overturned so that the street is almost completely blocked.

"So that is why it took so long!" said Bob.

"That's why, but it didn't bother Hero a bit," the trainer cried. "He had to go almost half a block to get you through the crowd and between the cars that were all jammed up in there. I won't need to spend much more time on you two, that's sure. You would be safe anywhere with this dog."

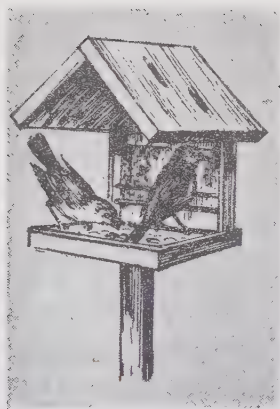
"That's a nice thing to find out the first time we ever crossed a street," said Bob.

"Yes, you had your first trial under fire, didn't you? How did it feel?"

"Well, to tell the truth, it was a little like the first time you go off a diving board. It made me fairly dizzy. Of course, I hadn't any idea what was happening. I just thought it was the widest street in the world."

The trainer laughed. "Be glad it's over," he said. "There'll never be another first time."

-Ruth Adams Knight



Jimmy and the Birds

Jimmy Boyd was crippled. When he walked, he had to use crutches. One Friday afternoon after school he sat watching the snow drift slowly past the window. He knew that the other boys his age in the small town where he lived were out sledding. He was sure Don Benson would be out earning money shoveling snow.

Then there were John and Richard Miller, who lived two houses down the street, and Bryon Shaffer on the corner, who could do so many things he so much longed to do.

"Has something gone wrong at school today, Jimmy, that you are so quiet?" Jimmy's mother stopped her work to ask.

"No," replied Jimmy. "I was only thinking. There just isn't much for me to do."

"Try hard to see something to do, Jimmy," Mother smiled. "Put on your thinking cap. Couldn't you help the birds this winter?"

Just then a bird flew to the tree near the window. Jimmy saw the little fellow. He looked hungry, for there was nowhere for him to find food, with the ground covered with deep snow. Quick as a flash, he thought, "I know what I can do. I'll make a little feeding station for the birds in our back yard."

Jimmy got a pencil and paper and some magazines and began to plan a feeding station. That evening when his father came home, Jimmy showed him the plan. . It sounded good to Father, and they decided to begin working on the feeding station as soon as supper was over. Mother suggested they use the empty orange crates that were just taking up space in the cellar.

"There is some roofing paper in the attic which was not used when the porch roof was repaired," added Father. "We'll use that to cover the top and sides. The roof-

ing paper will help protect the birds from the wind."

It wasn't long until they had the crates, roofing paper, tacks, and cleats and were busy at their work. After the crates were cleated together, they tacked the roofing paper firmly on the shelter.

"I wonder what kind of birds we can attract to our feeding station. Will they really come?" These were the thoughts that passed through Jimmy's mind as he helped his father. When it was finished, he looked it over with delight.

The evening passed rapidly and it was soon Jimmy's bedtime. Saturday morning Jimmy was up early. Mother helped him prepare small pieces of suet, bread crumbs, and doughnut crumbs. Jimmy went to the poultry house and brought grain and grit. Birds needed grit with their food in winter, so they mixed some with the food.

Father took the bird feeder and placed it near one of the trees. Before long juncos, chickadees, and sparrows were visiting the feeding station.

John, Richard, and Bryon were walking up the road with their sleds. As they

passed Jimmy's yard, one of the boys saw the feeder. Like all curious boys, they decided to look it over more carefully.

"Let's go ask Jimmy what he is trying to do," suggested Richard.

When they were in the house, Jimmy told the boys that he wanted to feed the birds because during the winter some may die if they are not able to find food. The boys decided they wanted to help Jimmy with his project.

"We have a book at home," exclaimed John, "that tells what all birds will eat."

"I have some sunflower seeds that I can bring from home," added Bryon.

The boys all ran home, very much excited, and they were soon back to Jimmy's house.

"These sunflower seeds are too large for the birds' tiny bills. Let's chop them," suggested Richard.

"Mother, John's book, FEEDING OUR BIRDS, says that chickadees like peanut butter. May we have some to see if they really do?" asked Jimmy. He was eager to try anything new.

Mother gave the boys some peanut butter. They put a little on dried bread. The rest



they made into little balls. After they put the peanut butter and sunflower seeds out, they went far enough away so that they would not frighten the birds which came.

At first the birds did not know what the peanut butter was. After one or two tried it, they seemed to tell the rest that it was all right — in fact, extra special. The birds soon ate it all and chirped around, looking for more. The boys were delighted and would have put out more, had mother permitted it.

The time came when Jimmy's friends had to go home. Before they left, each decided to help Jimmy during the winter to feed the birds. They came back often during the winter with table scraps to add to the supply of food and to watch the birds.

It was a lot of fun watching the birds greedily eating the raisins and peanuts. They discovered that juncos were especially fond of bread crumbs, pie crust, small bits of doughnuts, and ground pumpkin seeds. The chickadees, woodpeckers, and nuthatches tried to eat all the suet they could, and the English sparrows ate anything the boys put out.

One Saturday afternoon Richard and John brought several doughnuts with them when they came to Jimmy's house. "Let's put two on a string and tie them to the low limb of the tree," suggested John.

A few minutes later a chickadee came. As he gaily swung, he sampled his perch, and the boys watched the chickadee enjoy his fine treat.

And so it was feeding the birds during the cold winter months that convinced Jimmy that he could do something worthwhile. Even watching them eat was such a great thrill, but Jimmy's greatest reward was knowing that many birds lived through the cold winter that would otherwise have starved to death.

-Esther Gamber

The Robber

Chester Zook held the book lovingly in his hands. He fingered its smooth pages and admired the glossy pictures. It was just the book he wanted -- a book of wild-life. "But why does it cost so much?" he thought gloomily. The price tag on the cover appeared harmless and small, but it was big enough to spoil Chester's joy as he

looked at it. "Six dollars and fifty cents, that's too much to pay for a book. Besides, I don't have that much. All I have is two dollars."

"Can I help you, son?" asked the owner of the store, Mr. Jackson.

"No, no, I guess not," replied Chester. "I was just looking." Quickly he replaced the book on the shelf and walked out.

All the way home Chester kept thinking about that book. "Maybe I could sell my rabbit," he thought. "But I hate to do that. Besides, I could only get about a dollar and a half for it, and then I would still only have three dollars and a half." Try as he would, Chester could think of no way to get enough money to buy the book he wanted.

Nearly a week later Chester's mother asked him to go to the village store one evening to buy a loaf of bread. As Chester entered Jackson's General Store, he tried



not to think about the books at the opposite end of the store. He went straight to where the groceries were and picked up the bread. Mr. Jackson himself was at the counter. He put the bread into a bag for Chester. "Is that everything?"

"Yes," Chester said. He paid for the purchase and took the bag from the store owner.

"Say," said Mr. Jackson, "you wouldn't happen to know where some hickory trees are, would you?"

"Yes," Chester said. "There are two at the edge of the woods behind our barn. I know because I've gone there to look for squirrels."

"You were hunting a little meat for the table, were you?" Mr. Jackson smiled.

"Oh, no," Chester said quickly. "My father doesn't care for squirrel meat, and besides, I like to sit and watch them too well to shoot them, I guess. But why did you ask about the hickory trees?"

"Oh, I just thought I would like to buy some hickory nuts if I could find them." Mr. Jackson paused and rubbed his chin. "Seems I always have customers asking for them."

"I'm sure I could bring you some," Chester said. "How many do you want?"

"I can use a lot. I don't think I'll get overstocked right away. Bring in as many as you can find. I'll be glad to pay you fifty cents a peck."

"Oh, thank you," exclaimed Chester. "I'm sure I can find a lot."

"Don't be too certain," laughed Mr. Jackson. "Your good friends may have beat you to them. They often do that."

"What do you mean?" asked Chester, looking puzzled. "Have you been buying them from my friends?"

"No, no," Mr. Jackson laughed still harder. "I mean the squirrels."

"Oh, I see," Chester laughed, too. "I'm not going to worry about them. A few squirrels can't eat very many nuts. I'm sure there will still be some left for me."

As he hurried from the store, Chester was still chuckling to himself about how Mr. Jackson had called the squirrels his friends. "I guess they are my friends," Chester thought as he walked home. "I hope they won't mind sharing with me."

Eagerly Chester told his mother what Mr. Jackson had offered him. "Maybe I

can run down and gather some nuts tonight yet," Chester said.

"Perhaps," Mother said, "but wash up for supper right now. We've been waiting to eat."

After supper Chester wiped the crumbs from his mouth and hurried outside. He grabbed two baskets and sped down the farm lane toward the woods. He didn't have to hunt for the first tree — he knew exactly where it was.

For a moment he thought there were no nuts under the tree. Then he saw that they were partly hidden in the tall grass. Going to work, Chester soon had one basket filled. He hunted until he had enough for a second basket. It was nearly dark as he went home, his arms aching from the weight of the baskets.

Each evening after school he rushed back to the woods to hunt for hickory nuts.

Mr. Jackson was surprised to see all the nuts that Chester brought in. "You must have the squirrels helping you gather them," he said. "Where do you get them all?"

"I just hunt for the trees," Chester said, glad that Mr. Jackson was pleased.

"How many more do you think you can bring me?" Mr. Jackson asked.

"I don't know if I can find any more or not," Chester answered slowly. "I had to hunt a long while for the last basket. I need two more, so I'm going to hunt and hunt until I find them."

"What do you mean, you need two more?" Mr. Jackson asked.

"Then I'll have enough money to buy something I want."

"Oh, now I see why you've been working so hard every evening. Well, I hope you find the nuts."

Slipping to the rear of the store, Chester checked if the book was still there. It was! As he walked home, Chester thought about how badly he wanted that book with wildlife pictures. Somehow, he just had to find two more baskets of hickory nuts.

"Seems like I've searched the whole woods from one end to the other," he mused.

Nevertheless, the next evening he bravely grabbed two baskets and hiked toward the woods.

First he checked all the trees where he had gathered nuts earlier, but he found on-

ly a few that had dropped since then. After he looked in vain for a long time, he scrambled up to a rocky ledge not far from a big hickory tree. To his surprise he stumbled on a hollow that extended back under the ledge, a hollow as big as a small-sized cave. It was half full of dry leaves. As Chester reached inside, he felt some small round objects on the cave floor. He brushed aside the leaves with his hand. "Ha, here's a find!" he exclaimed, when he saw what he had uncovered. The whole bottom of the hollow was lined with big hickory nuts.

"But how did these nuts get here?" Chester stopped to think for just a moment. "Oh, of course, some squirrel dragged them in. Well, I'm in luck this time." He set to work to fill his baskets. There were just enough nuts to fill both of them to the brim.

As Chester rose to his feet, he heard a shrill chattering not far away. Looking up, he saw a grey squirrel perched on a branch of the hickory tree, protesting shrilly. Chester hesitated.

"How would I feel if a big giant came and stole all my things?" Chester thought. For



a moment the idea troubled him. He knew he was like a big giant to the squirrel. "Oh, well," he thought, shaking his head. "Mr. Squirrel doesn't own these nuts. He robbed them from our trees to start with." Grabbing the handles of the baskets, Chester was off.

That night he dreamed that a squirrel was scolding outside his window. It was only a shutter scraping, but it awakened Chester and he lay for some time thinking about the shallow cave and the nuts.

The next morning he did not have the heart, somehow, to take the nuts to the store. All that day he thought about the angry little squirrel's face that peered down at him from the limb of the tree.

The second night it snowed silently for hours, and by morning there was a deep snow on the ground. At breakfast Chester looked up from his oatmeal and cream.

"Father, will this snow hurt things?" he asked.

"Oh, no," said his father, "it's good for the wheat and..."

"I mean animals. Will it....will it hurt them?"

"The animals will stay in the barn. They don't mind."

"I mean wild things, like — like birds," stammered Chester, looking hard at his spoon.

"Birds? Oh, no. The birds that mind snow have gone south for the winter by now."

"But...but...the squirrels." At last the right word was out.

His father laughed. "We don't have to worry about the squirrels. If the squirrels didn't know enough to store a good supply of nuts, they have no one to blame but themselves."

"No one to blame but themselves." The words ran around in Chester's mind. "No one to blame — but it wasn't true. There was someone to blame."

Chester shoved away his oatmeal. "I have something important to do," he mumbled as he left the table.

Plowing his way through the fresh, loose snow was hard work with two baskets of nuts. But Chester didn't slow down until he reached the woods. Then he paused, thinking about the book at the store -- the wild-life book he wanted so much. He shook his head. "No," he said to himself, "I won't back out now."

When he reached the rocky ledge, he saw by the tracks in the snow that a visitor had been there before him. It was easy to see that the squirrel, hoping against hope, had come back again and again to see if a single nut had been left.

Chester felt sorry for the squirrel. "It must be terribly disappointed," he thought.

The mouth of the little cave was choked with snow, but when Chester reached inside, he found the hollow dry. Pouring the nuts quickly into the hole, he covered them with leaves.

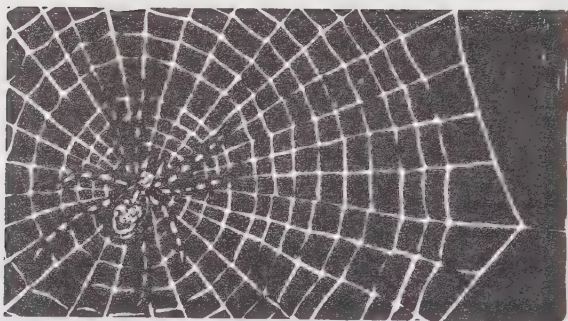
"Good," he said, as he straightened up. "I'm glad that's done." Just as he turned to go, there was a slight stir behind him.



Whirling around, he saw the squirrel perched on a limb, watching him. This time the little squirrel was silent, but his black eyes were keen with interest. He looked as if he could hardly wait for a chance to rush down and see what had happened.

"They're all back, old fellow!" Chester called. "Every single one of them. If you don't believe me, come and count them yourself."

As Chester hurried homeward through the deep snow, he heard the squirrel chattering loudly, but this time the chatter seemed to have a friendly sound.



The Spider and the Fly

"Will you walk into my parlor?"

Said a spider to a fly;

'Tis the prettiest little parlor

That ever you did spy.

The way into my parlor

Is up a winding stair,

And I have many pretty things

To show when you are there."

"Oh, no, no!" said the little fly,

To ask me is in vain;

For who goes up your winding stairs,

Can ne'er come down again."

"I'm sure you must be weary

With soaring up so high;

Will you rest upon my little bed?"

Said the spider to the fly.

"There are pretty curtains drawn around,
The sheets are fine and thin;
And if you like to rest awhile,
I'll snugly tuck you in."
"Oh, no, no!" said the little fly,
"For I've often heard it said,
They never, never wake again,
Who sleep upon your bed."

Said the cunning spider to the fly,
"Dear friend, what shall I do,
To prove the warm affection
I've always felt for you?
I have, within my pantry,
Good store of all that's nice;
I'm sure you're very welcome—
Will you please to take a slice?"
"Oh, no, no!" said the little fly,
"Kind sir, that cannot be;
I've heard what's in your pantry,
And I do not wish to see."

"Sweet creature," said the spider,
"You're witty and you're wise;
How handsome are your gauzy wings,
How brilliant are your eyes.

I have a little looking glass
Upon my parlor shelf;
If you'll step in one moment, dear,
You shall behold yourself."
"I thank you, gentle sir," she said,
"For what you're pleased to say,
And bidding you good-morning now,
I'll call another day."

The spider turned him round about,
And went into his den,
For well he knew the silly fly
Would soon be back again;
So he wove a subtle web
In a little corner sly,
And set his table ready
To dine upon the fly.
He went out to his door again,
And merrily did sing,
"Come hither, hither, pretty fly,
With pearl and silver wing;
Your robes are green and purple,
There's a crest upon your head;
Your eyes are like the diamond bright,
But mine are dull as lead."



Alas, alas! How very soon
This silly little fly,
Hearing his wily, flattering words,
Came slowly flitting by;
With buzzing wings she hung aloft,
Then near and nearer drew—
Thought only of her brilliant eyes,
And green and purple hue;
Thought only of her crested head—
Poor foolish thing! At last
Up jumped the cunning spider,
And fiercely held her fast.

He dragged her up his winding stair,
Into his dismal den
Within his little parlor—but
She ne'er came out again!
And now, dear little children
Who may this story read,
To idle, silly, flattering words,
I pray you, ne'er give heed;
Unto an evil counselor
Close heart and ear and eye,
And take a lesson from this tale
Of the spider and the fly.

— Mary Howitt

Ah-Tuck-Ta, My Little Polar Bear

I first met Ah-tuck-ta when I was returning from Ellesmere Island across Smith Sound. As we came from a large tract of rough ice onto a broad, white highway, there in front of us stood a baby bear. I have often wondered since how he happened to be there alone and where his mother could have been. Like other small boys, had he run away from home? It is the only time that I have ever found a small polar bear alone.

He was just the right size for a pet; therefore I decided to capture him alone. I called to the Eskimos to stop their dogs and tie them to a hole in the ice, which we do every night when we get into camp. I now took off my heavy deerskin coat, and holding it spread out in my two hands, walked slowly out on the ice. I wondered what he would do. Would he stand and fight, or would he run? Never having seen a man before, he was plainly puzzled as to just what kind of animal I was. There he stood, his sturdy legs well braced, ready

for battle. I crept up slowly, holding the fur coat in front of me as a screen, and also as a shield to protect me from his sharp and dangerous claws.

When I was within five or six feet, he did exactly as I have seen grown bears do, but probably it was the first time in his short life; he stuck out his upper lip into a point and began to blow air, as if he were trying to whistle. This means, "Look out!" It is the same kind of language which the rattlesnake uses when he shakes the rattles on the end of his tail.

When I was within two feet I threw myself directly at him and on him, and buried him completely in the folds of the coat. How he struggled and kicked and clawed and bit! His mother had never punished him like that. And the hair from the coat got into his eyes and ears and nose and mouth, and he didn't like that a bit.

Gradually his struggles ceased. He was now tired out and wanted to rest. Carefully I unrolled the coat, and there he was, breathing hard, his eyes looking straight into mine. Playfully I pushed my bearskin mitten into his mouth. His sharp little

teeth seized it instantly. I seized his lower jaw with one hand and his upper jaw with the other and slowly pried them apart. The mitten dropped out. He blinked his eyes and looked surprised, puzzled perhaps to know someone could open his mouth that way.

I decided to keep him as a pet, so that I might learn something of the ways of a polar bear.

I placed him, wrapped in my reindeer-skin coat, on top of my loaded sledge and tied him down with ropes, so that he could not wriggle away when my back was turned and I was busy driving my ten dogs.

At the end of the day's journey and after we had built our snowhouse, I untied little "Ah-tuck-ta" (the Eskimo name for a little polar bear), wondering what he would do. He walked over to one of the Eskimo boys, and standing on his hind legs, put his little front feet on his knees and looked up into his face, thinking perhaps that the boy was his mother! The boy, you know, had on bearskin pants and must have looked somewhat like his mother.

When I drove away from our snowhouse the next morning, my little bear followed

close behind my sledge and stayed at my heels in my snowshoe tracks all day long. I could see at times that he was tired, and also could hear at times that he was crying, puzzled perhaps to know why we were always hurrying on and never stopping to hunt for seals as he and his mother did at this time of the year.

When we are returning home in the spring, we never hunt during the day. I mean that although we can often count ten or even more seals sunning themselves on top of the ice, we never stop or go out of our way to get one. Since we and the dogs do not eat until the end of the day's journey, we plan to kill a seal at that time.

Late that afternoon we saw two seals lying at the same home. With a whispered, "Ail Ail!" we stopped the dogs and told them in Eskimo to keep quiet and lie down. I tied Ah-tuck-ta to the sledge so that he would not follow the boy who was now unrolling a white cotton screen about two feet square. This he arranged on the bow of a little wooden sledge. In the center of this piece of cloth was a small hole for the muzzle of the rifle.

Dropping down on his hands and knees the boy crawled along in the snow, pushing the sledge with its attached screen and rifle in front of him. You see, the white screen looked like the snow and the ice. When Mr. Seal looks up from his nap he thinks the white piece of cotton there in front of him is a clean bit of white snow. Then he drops his head and goes to sleep.

Kah-da (that was the name of the Eskimo boy), concealed in this way, crawled up to the seals. When we heard the sound of his rifle, away we dashed as hard as we could to get our supper. And how that little bear did eat! We didn't want the thick layer of fat or blubber on the skin, so we gave it all to Ah-tuck-ta. With his teeth and tongue he cleaned the skin almost as well as an Eskimo woman could do. He ate until his little tummy stuck out like a football. His paws were red with blood, his face was smeared with grease. He was a comical-looking thing.

I watched to see what he would do next, knowing that all polar bears are beautifully clean. He walked over to a nice white snowbank and stuck his dirty face into it. Then he rolled in it, over and over, until

he looked like a snowball. Placing his face and head between his paws, he rubbed and rubbed and rubbed again. Every now and then he looked up at me as if to ask, "Am I clean enough now? How do I look?"

That night I slept on my sledge out in the warm sunlight, as we often do in May and June. At that time, you know, there is no real darkness. The sun is up all the time, going around in a big circle in the sky. Little Ah-tuck-ta snuggled up beside my sleeping bag, and after a few contented grunts, dropped off to sleep. He was happy now, as all animals are if they have plenty to eat.

The next day we reached Etah, my arctic home for four years.

II. A Lively Pet

As we appeared on top of the hill above the house, I could hear the Eskimo children shouting and calling to each other, "Nan-nook! Nan-nook!" ("Bear! Bear!")

I took him down the hill and into the house and tied him to the leg of the bench in our workshop. He stood up on his hind legs and looked around and sniffed at everything, wondering, no doubt, what kind of place

this was, so different from anything he had ever seen before.

And there I left him while I went out to unharness and to feed my dogs. Within a few minutes the cook came bursting out through the door, waving both arms and yelling, "Hurry! The bear is tearing the house to pieces."

I ran through the kitchen and out into the workshop, and what a sight! Little Ah-tuck-ta was on his stomach on the edge of the bench, looking as if he were trying to swim. In his struggle to reach the window, where he could see light, he had swept everything off the bench with his paws — hammers, nails, saws, screw drivers, wrenches, rules, paintpots, and paintbrushes. He was daubed with red paint and black paint and soot from the stovepipe! He looked like anything but a white polar bear. What a mess! What a mess!

As he caught sight of me standing in the doorway, he fell backward off the bench and crying with rage because he couldn't reach the window, grabbed me by the leg. Knowing that he could do no harm because of the tough sealskin boots, I let him chew to his heart's content, until he had convinced

himself that his biting didn't do a bit of good.

What a time I had getting him clean again! After I had made several attempts with kerosene oil and warm water and soap, he began to look like a bear once more. But he didn't like to have his face washed any more than a small boy does. He wanted to wash it himself by rubbing it with his legs and paws.

I couldn't keep him in the house, as I wanted to do, because the big dogs might get loose and kill him while we were asleep. I had to keep him out of doors somewhere. Finally I decided to turn him loose and let him do whatever he wanted to do during the day, but to put him in a strong cage during the night, or during the time that I was asleep.

Whenever I wondered where he was I could generally find him playing on a snow-bank behind the house. And he was really playing. Some animals never seem to play. They spend all their time sleeping or eating or hunting for something to eat. In watching him I learned the cause of the paths, or furrows, on the sides or slopes of icebergs found frozen in the bay ice dur-

ing the winter and spring months. We often wondered what these marks were and how they were made. They were made by little polar bears sliding on their stomachs!

My little bear would walk up the sloping surface of a snowbank, turn around, spread out his front legs, drop down on his breast, and away he would go to the bottom. Then he would turn around and go back and try it again. I have read of beavers sliding on their tails. Now I know that little polar bears slide on their bellies!

Each day we went to walk, generally out across the harbor ice to the edge of the water — his favorite walk, for he knew that at the end he would have a swim, and how he did enjoy it! Although the water was ice-cold, in he would go, as happy as a small boy on a warm summer day. How easily he went through the water!

When I thought that he had been in long enough, I would turn away from the edge of the ice and start toward home, sometimes on the run, to make him think that I was leaving him. But I could never get away from him. Looking back over my shoulder, I would see him coming as fast as he could. And when he reached me he always cried a

bit, perhaps to show that he didn't like it because I had left him.

He was getting so large and strong that I wondered if I could possibly teach him to drag me on a sledge as my dogs did. I made the same kind of harness that I made for the dogs, with one trace, sixteen feet long, leading from about the middle of the back. My big sledge, which I used on my long trips every spring, I thought was too heavy. So I harnessed him to a light toboggan which I had brought with me from home.

I cracked my long rawhide whip out over his back, and away we went for a ride! I had planned to ride up the harbor toward the big glacier, but he had planned to go the other way, out to the edge of the ice where he could have his swim. I struck the ice with my whip to the right of my little bear and yelled, "How-ah! How-ah!" — the word in Eskimo which tells the dogs to go to the left. He didn't mind at all, but went right on out of the harbor toward the sea. I yelled again and struck harder, but it didn't make a bit of difference. He kept straight on. I touched him lightly on the back with the end of the whip. It only made him go

faster. I hit the ice hard just ahead of him to frighten him and make him stop. He put his head down low, closed his eyes, and went right on. And I never could teach him to do what I wanted him to do. In a few days I can train a dog to pull my sledge, to stop, to turn, to lie down. But I do not believe anyone can ever train a polar bear to do what a dog can do. Ah-tuck-ta was so stubborn that whenever we went to ride, we would always go where he wanted to go, never where I wanted to go.

A dog will do what one wants him to do because he is afraid of the whip. My bear did what he wanted to do, knowing that I could not hurt him with the whip. His fur was so heavy and so thick that probably he did not feel my whip at all. But I had lots of fun riding behind my polar bear, always wondering where he was going next and what he was going to do. Whenever I saw his mouth wide open and his tongue hanging out, I knew that he was getting tired, so I would run ahead, grab him by the collar, turn him around, and head him toward home. Then I would walk on ahead. He would stick out his upper lip a bit and cry a little to tell me that he didn't want to go

home, but would always follow me as he would his mother.

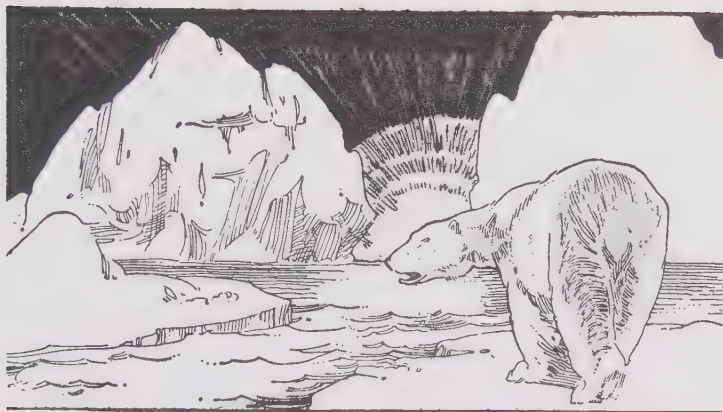
III. Something Calling

The days went rapidly by, as they always do in the North, with so much to do. The birds were all back from their homes in the South, some of them from thousands of miles away. The white whales and narwhals were playing and feeding out beyond the end of the point. The walrus were calling from pan to pan. The snow was melting rapidly all along the shore, and flowers could be seen everywhere, dotting the hill-sides. There I could see the dandelion, the buttercup, the daisy, the yellow poppy, and many, many others that you would know. The water was as calm and smooth as glass. There was no wind.

It was perfect weather, with the bright sun rolling along the tops of the northern hills, as I bade my little bear good night and put him in a strong box to protect him from the dogs while I slept. Tired from our long walk up the bay and up the cliffs looking for gulls' eggs, he curled up on an old mat and dropped quickly off to sleep.

When I awoke in the morning, to my surprise, he was sitting on top of the box and looking out to sea. Turning his head now this way, now that way, he was listening to the sound of the sea, to the lapping of the waves against the ice, to the crushing of small ice pans as they drifted together in the tide.

I knew then that he was thinking of leaving me, and I knew why. Here there was a good home, with plenty of food. Here were comfort and happiness and friends who were kind, but it was not his life. He was not born for a life of ease — simply to play, to sleep, and to eat. There was something out there beyond the point that was calling, always calling. There was blue water dotted with pure white icebergs, looking like great blocks of marble. A bed on one of those, lashed by wind and waves and flying spray, was far better than a wooden box. Days and nights without food and always hunting, hunting, hunting, and yet fighting on against cold and darkness and death, yes, that would be much better than being fed every morning by someone else. He was not living his life. He wanted to show why he was born, to do something,



to act, to fight against cold and darkness and death. This would mean satisfaction and happiness and true success.

Together that day we roamed over the hills, he always at my heels, willing to go wherever I wanted to go. From the top of our highest hill, eleven hundred feet above the harbor, we sat together and looked out over the beautiful waters of Smith Sound. Far to the west I could see the big ice cap of Ellesmere Island, with its many white tongues reaching down to the sea. That was Ah-tuck-ta's home. That was where I had found him, an orphan, months before. I was wondering if he knew, if he remembered those happy days when he followed

his mother through the snow from seal hole to seal hole, days when he hid behind the hummock while his mother went on, and days when he crept along by her side, lying low and doing his best. Perhaps he did.

Again at the end of the day I put him in his box. He peeped out between the iron bars and watched me as I walked back to the house. I could still see his little black nose as I rounded the house.

In the morning he was gone. He had squeezed between the bars. I followed his tracks in the new fall of light snow — down the bank, out on to the harbor ice, and straight out toward open water. Much as he had wanted to stay with me, he could not resist. He had gone back where he had to use his wits and every muscle in his little body in order to live. But I knew that he was happy in doing this, that he was doing exactly what he should do.

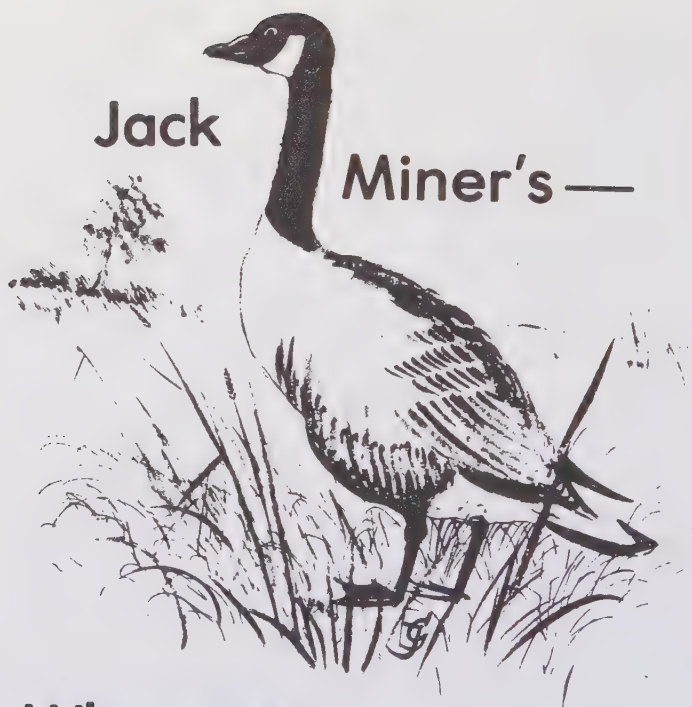
As the days and weeks went by, I missed him. I had lost my playmate and companion. And when the dark days of winter came on, and the winds howled and the snow drifted high against my window, I often wondered where Ah-tuck-ta was and what he was doing. I wondered if he would

remember and some day come back to see me just for a few minutes.

I really think that he did, for during the twilight days of February, when the sun had not yet appeared above the horizon, I discovered the small tracks of a bear on the shore not far from the house. He had returned as far as he dared. He could see the lights in the window, but he could hear the howling of the dogs, the same dogs that had frightened him so when he was a baby. I could see where he had stopped and stood, where he had walked to the right, then turned to the left, and then slowly walked back over the point and back out to the sea.

He had gone back to his own life, to the life he loved, the real life of a polar bear, the King of the North.





Where Wild

Birds Are Tame

It was just starting to get dark as the four of us walked briskly down the blacktop road a few miles outside of the small Ontario town of Kingsville. As we glanced

up the road ahead of us, we spotted a man with a gun approaching. He was clad in a thick red hunter's coat and carried his shotgun slung across his shoulder. As he passed, I noticed with surprise that the hunter was empty-handed. He had not succeeded in shooting any game.

What was so surprising about an empty-handed hunter? Ordinarily there would be nothing, but this was different. Only an hour before my three friends and I had stood in awe as we watched thousands of wild geese so close to us that we could have killed them with a sling shot. Yet barely a mile away this hunter with his shotgun had watched the sky all evening and had not been able to shoot a single goose.

Why had we seen so many geese and the hunter had seen none? For an explanation to this question, we need to go back to the 1890's. At that time hardly anyone had ever heard of a man called Jack Miner. And none of his neighbors would ever have guessed that he would someday become famous as a friend to wildlife. He was just an ordinary, common outdoorsman who liked to hunt. He was a deadly shot with the rifle. He and his brother Ted would shoot a

wheelbarrow full of wild ducks and geese to sell to the rich people from Detroit once a week.

But then one day in 1898 something happened that was to change Jack Miner's entire life. He and his brother were out in the woods with a friend, tracking moose. Suddenly a shot rang out, and Jack heard his friend gasp in alarm, "I shot Ted."

Stunned with grief, Jack carried his brother's body the thirteen miles out of the woods and took him home. The accident affected him deeply. He could not bring himself to go hunting again. He decided that he had had enough of killing.

Even before the tragic accident, Jack Miner had noticed that each year there seemed to be fewer and fewer wild ducks and geese. As the acres of forests were turned to plowed fields for farmland, every kind of wildlife was dwindling in number. After the loss of his brother, Jack Miner began to think more about this. He thought of all the ducks and geese he himself had shot. He knew that thousands of other hunters were doing the same thing. He felt sorry for the ducks and geese as he saw them fighting a losing battle to survive.

Most of all, he felt bad about his part in causing the death of so many birds. He wondered what he could do to make up for the damage he had already done.

Every spring and fall huge V-shaped groups of geese and ducks flew overhead. As Jack Miner watched them, he realized there wasn't a single place where the birds could rest in safety. Every time they landed, even for a moment to rest their tired wings or to feed, they were in danger of their lives. Hunters with deadly weapons were found on every mile of their long journeys north and south.

As Jack Miner thought about these things, slowly an idea formed in his mind. He would be a friend to the birds. On his farm they would be safe from the hunter's gun. He would feed them and give them a chance to rest before they continued on their dangerous journey.

It was a good plan but would it work, Jack Miner wondered. All his life he had been the birds' enemy. Would they trust him now to be their friend? He decided the least he could do was try it.

In February, 1904 Jack Miner bought seven wild geese from a neighbor. He

clipped their wings and turned them loose in a small pond behind his barn. "Now we shall see if any other geese will join them," Jack said hopefully.

Jack Miner watched the skies day after day. He waited and hoped, but no geese stopped. The spring passed in disappointment. In the fall it was the same story. All the geese stayed high in the sky, afraid to go near a place where they had been shot at so often in the past.

It looked as if Jack Miner's plan would end in failure. His neighbors laughed and joked about his crazy ideas and told him it would never work. Jack Miner said nothing, but he wasn't ready to give up yet.

The second year passed — and the third. Still no success. But just when it seemed hopeless, one April day in 1908, eleven Canada geese landed cautiously on the pond and ate hungrily of the corn Jack had been putting out for four years. Jack Miner was wild with delight.

Each year after that, more geese seemed to know about the secret — that among all their enemies, they had one friend. Soon the buckets of corn Jack carried to them was not enough. He began to scatter corn

by the sackful, and finally scoop it from a wagon. Year after year the birds returned in greater numbers.

There was one thing Jack wondered about as he watched the birds come and go each spring and fall. Where did they go? Where were their summer nests and their winter homes? There were a lot of guesses, but no one seemed to know. Jack made up his mind to find out. He scratched his address on a tiny piece of aluminum and fastened it to the leg of a black duck. A month later the duck was shot in Anderson, South Carolina. The hunter found the makeshift band, read the address and returned it to Miner. Over the years Jack Miner banded thousands of birds and gathered information which showed the routes of ducks and geese. No longer was it necessary to guess where the birds went, for Miner was able to draw detailed maps showing their summer and winter homes, and their flight paths during migration. This new information helped the government to pass laws which protected the birds during nesting season and during migration.

Jack Miner died in 1944 at the age of

seventy-nine. Today the bird sanctuary is run by his three sons.

II. Our Visit to the Sanctuary

Having heard about the bird sanctuary, three friends and I decided to visit it and see what it was like. We phoned the sanctuary to find out what is the best time of the day to be there. Jack Miner's oldest son, Manly, answered and advised us to be there at 4:00 P.M., since that is when the birds are fed.

We climbed off the Greyhound bus only a half mile from the sanctuary. A sign on the side of a flat-roofed garage pointed with a large red arrow — JACK MINER'S.

Before we had covered half the distance, we could hear the honking of the geese. As we looked up, we could see birds in flight. We knew we were at the right place, and hurried eagerly onward.

The first sign we saw as we neared the sanctuary was set off to the right of the road. In large black letters it said, CLOSED ON SUNDAYS. In smaller letters and printed within the outline of a church-

house was a second rebuke to Sunday sight-seers — "See you in church. "

"That's rather unusual for a place like this to be closed on Sunday," we remarked to each other as we hurried on. "They could probably do more business on Sunday than on any other day. "

That's what we thought before we learned that there is no business. We soon discovered at the entrance to the Jack Miner homestead a printed poster which said, "The Birds Are Here. " The poster went on to say that this was private property, but that visitors were welcome. It also said, among other things, that the management could not be held responsible for accidents. But the part I remember best was where it said,

There is no admittance fee. No tipping is allowed. No post cards or souvenirs are sold. It was Jack Miner's wish that "in the name of God there be one place on earth where no money changes hands.

We found the place so different — such a refreshing change from most places like this. There was absolutely no buying or

selling. Even a small boy who ventured in with a basket of apples to sell was promptly asked to leave the grounds by Manly Miner himself. We were delighted that there were no high-priced guides begging to take us on a tour, no glaring billboards to disfigure the landscape, and no expensive souvenirs to tempt us. It was so unlike other tourist places, such as Niagara Falls, for example, where nature had been taken advantage of and made ugly by the dollar sign.

We learned that Jack Miner was a deeply religious man. Wildlife and nature were a study for him, causing his faith in God to become stronger. In later life he often said, "No intelligent man can live in the great outdoors without being forced to believe there is an overruling Power." Jack Miner began to put short Bible verses on the duck and geese bands, along with his address. He received letters from hundreds of people, including Eskimos and Indians from the Hudson Bay area, thanking him for doing this. They were pleasantly surprised to find a Bible verse in such an unlikely place as a goose's leg.

Most of the geese at the sanctuary are Canada geese. They have spent the summer in the far north. In mid-September the first of the migrating birds arrive at the sanctuary. More and more come with each passing day. We visited the sanctuary on October 25, and there were around 8,000 birds there then. They keep on increasing in number until the last of November, when there are about 25,000 there. Then most of them leave for their winter grounds in the south. About five thousand birds, though, stay at the sanctuary all winter.

The day we visited the sanctuary, a number of tourists were there, including two school buses of children and a chartered bus from a mental hospital. Though we were very different in background, age, and interests, everyone seemed to mingle in friendly excitement as we all gazed at the wing-filled skies above us. It was fascinating to watch the huge flocks of geese coming in, flying in V-shaped patterns until just before they landed. Then they would drop gracefully to the ground.

The birds are fed on several hundred acres of flat grassland. The corn was spread out for the birds a little while before we arrived. Some birds were already landing when we came, their black heads dotting the large fields. At four o'clock, when the birds were coming in the thickest, Jasper Miner, Jack's youngest son, walked to the back of the field, chasing up the birds farthest away from us. This caused them to fly forward and land closer to us, giving us a better view. As he chased the birds, the sky became black with beating wings and out-stretched necks. The air rang with musical honks.

We stood and watched the breath-taking sight. Soon the field before us was covered with geese. For those who wanted an even closer view, there was a small pond where wild ducks and geese could be coaxed into eating right out of one's hand.

I wondered if being so close to people and being fed by them would not cause the birds to be less afraid of hunters when they left the sanctuary. If this happened, it might be the cause of more geese being shot. In chatting with another man, I mentioned this fear.

"No," he said, "you don't need to worry. The same birds that are tame here are as wild as anything when they leave."

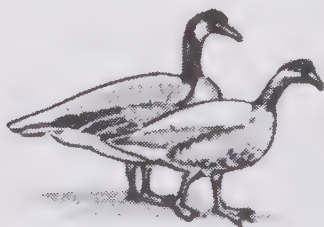
He pointed to a flock high in the sky, still far in the distance. They were coming in off of Lake Erie to join their feeding companions. "See how high those birds are when they come in," the man said. "For a mile all around this sanctuary, no one is allowed to shoot. Outside that zone there are a lot of hunters watching for a goose stupid enough to fly low. Somehow the geese seem to know. See how high they stay until they're just overhead, and then they drop down."

I watched as the flock the man had pointed out grew nearer and larger. Just as he had said they would, they remained high in the sky until they were almost overhead. Then they circled, and dropping rapidly, landed in the field only a few hundred feet from us.

I marveled as I saw the vast number of birds feeding calmly, paying no attention to the long line of cars, the people who stood there staring at them, the shouting children, and the clicking cameras. They were not afraid, and yet as soon as they

left the sanctuary, they would need to be as wild and as afraid as ever. Here they could relax their guard, in perfect trust that Jack Miner would keep his word when he said that he would be their friend.

As I thought on these things, I was thankful for an added bonus — that there is one place on earth where not only birds, but also tourists are safe. For a delightful change, there was no one after our money.



A Bird's Lesson

A little bird, with feathers brown,
Sat singing on a tree;
The song was very soft and low,
But sweet as it could be.

And all the people passing by
Looked up to see the bird
Whose singing was the sweetest
That ever they had heard.

But all the bright eyes looked in vain;
For birdie was so small,
And, with a modest dark brown coat,
He made no show at all.

"Papa dear," little Gracie said,
"Where can this birdie be?
If I could only sing like that,
I'd sit where folks could see."

"I hope my little girl will learn
A lesson from that bird,
And try to do what good she can—
Not to be seen nor heard.

"This birdie is content to sit
Unnoticed by the way,
And sweetly sing his Maker's praise,
From dawn to close of day.

"So live, my child, to do some good,
Let life be short or long;
Though people may forget your looks,
They'll not forget your song."

-Wooster's Reader, 1915

Thank You, Lord

I thank You for the sun that shines
On soil and sea and grasses;
Whose warming rays bring forth the flowers
In fragrant, showy masses.

I thank You for the wind that blows,
Disturbing air and ocean;
That tosses clouds and kites on high,
And keeps the leaves in motion.

I thank You for the rain that comes
 To water fields and flowers,
And for the bow of color bright
 That follows summer showers.

I thank You for the food which grows
 In fields and lakes and mountains
I thank You for the waters cool—
 For wells and flowing fountains.

I thank You for the big wide world,
 With all its love and beauty.
And for the joy of living here
 I'll try to do my duty.

- Edward L. Kauffman

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For permission to use their materials grateful acknowledgment is made to the following authors and publishers:

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LIST OF POEMS

A Bird's Lesson	491
A Little Brother Follows Me	61
All Things Bright	410
A Servant	341
Be Careful What You Say	162
Bird Trades	261
Dare to Say "No"	111
I Must Be	364
Little by Little	213
Secret Things	328
Thank You, Heavenly Father	80
Thank You, Lord	492
The Boy and the Acorn	47
The Bravest Thing	78
The Chicken's Mistake	283
The Garden	164
The Garden	406
The Greatest Thing	77
The Prisoner	161
The Shepherd's Psalm	224
The Shining Web	428
The Spider and the Fly	458
This is my Father's World	196
Two Seeds	150
What Shall the Children Bring?	6
When Father Prays	389

